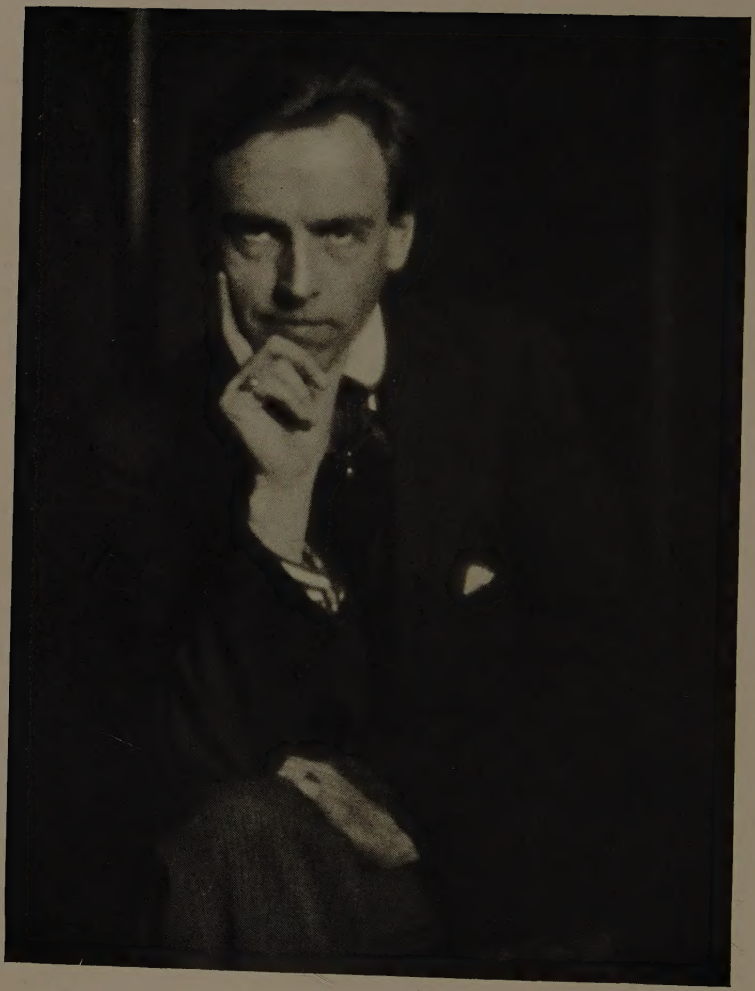
Enid Carley
Hay-on-Wye
October 1980

Delius . p. 200
The Cedars p. 45
(home of Augener,
where Grieg stayed?)
Grieg p. 218

MY YEARS OF INDISCRETION



THE AUTHOR [*Alvin Langdon Coburn*

MY YEARS OF INDISCRETION

BY

CYRIL SCOTT

WITH SIXTEEN ILLUSTRATIONS FROM PHOTOGRAPHS

"As he reached the years of indiscretion . . ."—KIPLING.

MILLS & BOON, LIMITED
49 RUPERT STREET
LONDON, W. 1

Published 1924

Made and printed in Great Britain by
Neill & Co., Ltd., Edinburgh.

TO

THE FRIENDS OF MY STUDENT-DAYS

PERCY GRAINGER

ROGER QUILTER

AND

BALFOUR GARDINER

I AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBE THESE MEMOIRS

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MY YEARS OF INDISCRETION

CHAPTER I

MY PROFESSORS

WHEN Goethe wrote his own life at an advanced age, he wrote it so inaccurately that Lewes felt compelled to come after him and sweep up all the mistakes. But, in addition to the drawbacks of a faulty memory, if a man waits till he is over three-score years and ten to write his life-story, it assumes such vast proportions that his readers are wearied long before they reach the end. It is wise, therefore, to make one's autobiographical hay while the sun of middle-age is still shining—that is, should one wish or, as in my case, be persuaded to make it at all. And yet, never having thought of this, when I was first asked to write my memoirs, I gave the unhesitating answer that I was far too young. "When old men," I declared, "have exhausted other recreational possibilities, including their vices, they sit down and write their memoirs; and to excuse the vanity which is partly the cause of their resolution, they express the fervent hope that others may profit by their experiences and follies." No doubt they would feel insulted if one quoted La Rochefoucauld's cynicism to the effect that "*Les vieillards aiment à donner de bons préceptes pour se consoler de ne plus être en état de donner de mauvais exemples*" —but that is what it amounts to in the end, and that is exactly what I do not wish it to amount to in my own

case. Thus I shall be quite content for my pages to be covered merely with the usual printers' ink, and not with "moralic acid": which means in plainer English, that I aspire but to interest and entertain—nothing further.

Nearly all autobiographers commence with the superfluous information—crudely and unequivocally stated—that they were *born*. But as in one of my books [1] I have written a chapter headed "Originality as a Sense," I cannot be so insincere or so inefficient as to practise something quite opposed to what I have preached. There are other reasons why I do not wish to begin these memoirs at infancy: I feel myself insufficiently celebrated or interesting to warrant such an egotistical course; it is not what I may relate about myself, but what I may relate about others which justifies me in writing this book. For although in my childhood and boyhood I may have met people who were interesting to me personally, this is no proof that they will have the same effect on an already overburdened public. True, it will be advisable during the course of these reminiscences to make a few unobtrusive allusions to my earliest years; but that is a matter rather of expediency than of egotism, an attribute which I shall have many occasions to satirise, especially while I write the beginning of this history—the period of my youth.

Until I was sixteen odd years of age I had serious intentions of becoming a pianist, and of going to Leschetizky in Vienna for "a few finishing touches"; but towards my seventeenth year I entirely altered my views and preferred a composer's career instead. For that reason I decided to go to Iwan Knorr at Frankfurt, and seriously to take up the study of composition, having been told that Knorr was by far the best teacher of his kind in Germany.

I had at the time been writing various small things

[1] *The Philosophy of Modernism*, Kegan Paul.

IWAN KNORR
(from a photo by Mr. Arnold Jones)

while studying harmony with a local organist at my home in Oxton, Cheshire; but the composition which I intended to show Knorr on my arrival was a Trio for Violin, Cello, and Pianoforte—my *chef d'œuvre*, as I then thought. Indeed, in my ignorant conceit I imagined Knorr would be greatly impressed, and as I had been studying musical form on my own very carefully, would find no holes to pick in it, and would forthwith pass me into the orchestration class—orchestration being a subject about which I knew nothing.

Yet how different came to be the actual facts! After having listened to this long and pretentious work, he smiled at me and said dispassionately: "As an indication of talent, it is considerable; but as a work of art, it is nothing. . . ." My pride subsided like a pricked balloon, and I flushed with humiliation, the more so as several other students were present at the time.

After that I was put back to writing the very simplest forms, and as even with these I did not at first satisfy my professor, it took fully two years till I was in a position to learn a single note of orchestration. One lesson, however, I had learnt—a very necessary one—to have entire confidence in and to love my teacher. From that time onwards it was comparatively smooth sailing, and I always looked forward with intense pleasure to the hour of the composition class.

Iwan Knorr was no cut-and-dried German music professor; on the contrary, he was distinctly Russian in appearance; he had lived for many years in Russia, had married a Russian woman, and had been able to count Tschaikowski among his few friends. Although neither haggard nor anæmic-looking, he was of slender build, of sallow complexion, and possessed of iron-grey hair, which stood straight up from his head in the manner in which hair is supposed to stand, but

doesn't, when people get a severe fright. His mode of dress was unæsthetically striking; he invariably wore elastic-sided boots with false buttons, and a cravat which looked as if two pieces of nondescript stuff had been glued on to a bit of cardboard—as I believe they *had*; furthermore, browny-yellow trousers of a distinctly bilious shade, and far too full in the seat—which used to hang down in a very curious manner suggestive, if the simile be permitted, of the posterior of an elephant; and to complete his outfit, a black pork-pie hat without the customary indentation. In a word, Iwan Knorr could not be called smart, as far as exteriors go; but as if to compensate for this lack, he was unusually smart with his tongue, and his stuffy classroom was often the scene of embarrassments and blushes as the result of his witty sarcasms.

"*Aber hacken Sie doch nicht so, es ist das reinste Kotlett!*" ("But don't thump like that, it's a regular mutton-chop!") he would say to one pupil who banged the piano; or again, to an orchestration pupil who presented him with an over-scored sheet: "*Der Bogen kostet fünf Pfennig—Sie meinen also, man soll ihn vollschmieren!*" ("The sheet costs a halfpenny, so I suppose you think you ought to plaster it over from top to bottom!")

Yet he never resorted to anger; but, as he admitted, preferred these reprimandory measures instead. Not once during my three years' tuition did I see him roused—if pleased with his pupils, he was witty *minus* personal sarcasm; if displeased, he was witty *plus* personal sarcasm, and that was all. And it says much for a man who suffered from a chronic complaint of the gall-bladder, and also from a very trying though adoring wife. This wife, in fact, loved him with a love which made intercourse with his friends a matter of paramount difficulty. Being an ardent chess-player, he would occasionally invite one or other of his friends to have a game at his flat; but perhaps at the most

exciting moment of the game, the gas would all of a sudden go out.

"Hallo," his friend would say, "something's gone wrong with the meter."

But Knorr would merely chuckle and answer apologetically: "It's only my wife—she thinks we've played long enough."

Although Knorr, unlike his colleague Humperdinck, never showed any signs of timidity or shyness whilst conducting his classes, he was of a very retiring disposition, and owned himself utterly at a loss for anything in the shape of small-talk. It was, indeed, one of his jocular admissions that on being introduced to strangers he would mutter very rapidly: "*Fünfunddreissig, sechsunddreissig*" ("Thirty-five, thirty-six"), thereby leading the introducees to imagine he had said something adequately intelligent.

And yet, in spite of his almost incessant cheerfulness and good humour, there was an indescribable *something* about this man which always excited in me, and I think in others too, a feeling of commiseration. Not that either his face or his voice struck me as sad in any way, but there existed in his personality an element which evoked in my mind the adjective pathetic.

I have just mentioned Humperdinck, the author of *Hänsel and Gretel*, and Wagner's ex-secretary; which reminds me that when quite young and during my first visit to Frankfurt—this was my second—I had one or two lessons from him I shall not be likely to forget. As in those days he was very poor, *Hänsel and Gretel* having not yet been composed, the Director of the Conservatoire charitably engaged him as a professor, but had perforce to dispense with his services shortly afterwards, for the reason that he was quite incompetent to teach. As Knorr described it, he would enter the class-room, sit down at the desk, and absent-mindedly, so it seemed, start to count his ten fingers by ticking them off one against the other;

then, having satisfied himself that they were all there, he would say dreamily, looking at one of the students : " Herr Lampe— "

" Excuse me, my name is Sekles."

" Well, Herr Sekles, go and write out the natural notes of the horn on the blackboard."

Herr Sekles would comply, after which Humperdinck would grunt in a very non-committal way, so that nobody knew whether the notes had been correct or otherwise, and the performance would start all over again.

" Herr Trautmann—"

" Excuse me, my name is Rindskopf."

" Well, Herr Rindskopf, now *you* go and write out the natural notes of the horn. . . ." And so it would continue, for Humperdinck treated his students like children instead of adults ranging from nineteen to thirty. But on these occasions the erratic professor did at least stay in the class-room till the end of the lesson, which was more than he did when teaching orchestral score-reading to my two colleagues, Norman O'Neill and Holland Smith. From the latter, who for many years has been chief master of music at Durham School, I learnt that Humperdinck used to keep them waiting for about twenty minutes before he remembered to enter the class-room at all—and then, having arrived and listened to them for appreciably less than a quarter of an hour, would disappear, never to return. Having once left the class-room with its two heel-kicking occupants, he evidently forgot all about it and them, and wandered off into the professors' retiring-room or into a brown study—or, more likely, into both.

" I would be labouring away at some complicated score," Holland Smith told me, " when suddenly I would hear Norman O'Neill giggling behind me. Rather annoyed at him for ridiculing my miserable efforts, I would turn round.

"'You needn't bother to keep that up,'" said the culprit, "'*he's* gone. . . .'"

The strangest story about Humperdinck, however, was connected with his departure into the country for the summer holidays. He and his family occupied at that time a modest little flat on which they turned the key when they left. But they had not been gone more than a few days when the tenants of the flats above and below became distressfully conscious of an enigmatical and nauseating odour. This was finally traced to Humperdinck's flat, and as its consequences were becoming more and more serious, steps had to be taken to deal with the matter, the first and most natural one being to write to the professor himself. Yet, seeing this was only rewarded by a complete postal silence, the landlord was brought upon the scene, and after a lengthy consultation felt himself justified, with the aid of a locksmith, in breaking into the flat. On the table he discovered the putrefying remains of the last Humperdinck meal, which included three-fourths of a leg of mutton. The mystery was thus cleared up —likewise the table.

Although I devoted most of my time to the study of composition, I nevertheless took piano lessons, in which as it happened I showed very little interest. It was one thing to create music of one's own : it was quite another to spoil one's pleasure in other people's by playing it over and over again till one was sick of the very sound of it. But as the rules of the Conservatoire did not permit the study of one subject only, I had to set my personal inclinations aside. And I am very glad that I did so—for apart from more obvious reasons, I have come to regard my piano professor, who is still alive, as one of my very near friends.

Professor Uzielli is a Neapolitan by birth, though a naturalised German, and he now lives in Cologne, where he is the chief teacher of the piano, and, I believe, one of the most respected musicians in that town.

When I first took lessons from him he must have been about thirty-four, and I remember that his Italian handsomeness and open, charming smile, together with his smart appearance, were responsible for many a heart-flutter among the female students at the Conservatoire. It is true that he was married to a very fine and popular singer, Madame Julia Uzielli, who was as beautiful to look upon as to listen to, but the hearts fluttered nevertheless; or, perhaps the more so, since the object of their fluttering was, at least from a matrimonial point of view, unattainable. Herr Uzielli had been a pupil of Madame Schumann's, and although possessed of a marked individuality, he for the most part initiated his pupils into the tenets of the Schumann school of piano-playing—a school which is unmistakable, whether we admire it or not.

From what I have already said, it will be patent that as a piano pupil I was far from desirable; indeed, numberless times I came to my lesson without having practised an adequate amount, so that Herr Uzielli would irritably waggle his foot and lean back in his chair in an attitude of silent hopelessness—or else come over and close the book, telling me it was useless to appear at the lesson if I couldn't do better than *that*. And certainly I *could* have done better, had I not possessed that inherent distaste for practising, and in addition been overcome by the most debilitating nervousness. For one thing Herr Uzielli—who can blame him?—was not always in the best of moods at eight o'clock in the morning, the hour at which we had our lessons, nor were my fingers, especially when the morning was cold; and if, when he came into the room, his "*Guten Tag*" was likewise cold, my fingers became even stiffer than they otherwise might have been, and I looked significantly at my fellow-pupil with a look that said: "We're in for it to-day, so God help us!"

I should explain that at every piano lesson there were

PROF. L. UZIELLI
THE AUTHOR'S PIANOFORTE PROFESSOR

two pupils—the one having to wait and listen while the other performed. This arrangement was to obviate the necessity for chaperons, or, as a substitute, glass doors : for it was feared that the teachers might gratuitously instruct their prettier female students in the art of love-making instead of in the art for which the said students, *or* their parents, had paid their fees. Nor was the fear unfounded ; in spite of the above-mentioned system there had been several scandals, professors having exchanged their elderly wives for younger ones recruited from among the frequenters of the Conservatoire. Yet how the inconvenient gooseberry-playing co-pupil had been hoodwinked or disposed of on these romantic but home-shattering occasions, neither history nor scandal relates ; one can only presume that while pupil number one was engrossed in nervously trying to satisfy her master, the master himself was conversing behind her back with pupil number two in that silent but eloquent language which is spoken through the eyes alone. One is not even disposed to feel surprised at such occurrences, since the falling in love with one's music-master is, if the expression be permitted, an erotic platitude which has existed ever since music began. Not that the master can be expected always to reciprocate the sentiment—this would augment his emotional obligations almost to the dimensions of those of King Solomon—but, on the other hand, the music professor who can go through his professorial life without falling in love with at least *one* of his pupils is a phenomenon worthy of mention in the history of erotics. As already said, even during my comparatively short stay in Frankfurt, there were several romances of a more or less serious nature, involving the shipwreck of beautiful society girls against the rocks of public opinion, not to mention parental fury. There came, indeed, a day when, as the result of one scandal after another, practically the entire staff was weeded out, and the

Conservatoire was deprived of its most renowned professors, these gentlemen having been requested to quit by a severe and order-loving director.

The story of one of these dismissals was not without its humorous side.

It seems that the wife of a certain violinist who had so far forgotten himself as to kiss one of his pupils, and had received his *congé* as the result, had gone to the irate director to remonstrate with him.

"Really, Herr Director," she had said, "it is too absurd to make such a fuss about a mere kiss—in *our* circle, *everybody* kisses. . . ."

Excellent wife, and much to be admired for her broad-mindedness and sense of humour; but, unfortunately, the extrication of her husband from this particular dilemma proved not to be so easy as all that. He had passed the age when his kisses were invariably acceptable to young ladies—and this particular young lady had *complained*!

But in any case, it would have been quite out of keeping with the director's personality to overlook such an offence; there were many less grave ones for which both pupils and professors had stood nervously before that commanding yet absurdly-clothed figure. His face was exceedingly red, though not combined with that general condition of corpulency so often associated with a rubicund countenance; from a high forehead long streams of snow-white hair were thrown back, presenting a modified form of that professorial coiffure flippantly called "*Sardellen*"—sardines—because of its greasy appearance. He wore light brownish-yellow tweed trousers, similar to those of Iwan Knorr, a waistcoat to correspond, and on top of these, be it noted, an ebony-black frock coat, which waved in the breeze as he shuffled—one cannot say *walked*—along the street.

Yet, however incongruous his exterior, it failed to strike any of us as comic, for this learned doctor of

music—his name was Dr Bernard Scholz—inspired us far too definitely with the fear of God to permit the intrusion of any such element. Although we regarded him as a pedant of the worst type, and even coined the expression " musical ass " as a fitting appellation for him, we admitted his dignity and were very chary of arousing his wrath. . . . And undoubtedly he *was* a pedant ; his many compositions, including an opera, were examples of unalleviated, pompous dullness from start to finish ; yet in his learned myopia he wrote letters to the papers complaining of the too infrequent performances of his works, prophesying at the same time that these works would assuredly receive their due *after* his death, and that it was regrettable they should not receive it while he was still alive. That his prophecies have not come true is shown by the fact that though he *has* died—in Florence, poor man, of a broken heart, during the war—his works have died with him.

It was rightly assumed that Knorr would become director after the retirement of Dr Scholz, for although the latter was nominally the head, Knorr in his unobtrusive way exercised considerable influence. Temperamentally he and his director were as divergent as it is possible to be : Knorr appreciated and encouraged originality, Scholz looked upon it as musical blasphemy ; and on this account, the professors were far more in sympathy with Knorr than with their principal.

There is a story connected with these temperamental differences of which my colleague, Balfour Gardiner, is the hero. Under Knorr's guidance he was in process of composing some work or other—a pianoforte trio, I think ; but as Knorr was absent from time to time, his pupils were on such occasions taken over by the director. There happened to be a particular passage in this trio to which Knorr had taken exception and substituted some ideas of his own. When, however, Balfour Gardiner came to show the

work to Dr Scholz, that pedantically-minded doctor pounced upon the very passage which was Knorr's and not Gardiner's.

" *That*—I don't like at all," he said.

" Indeed," was the rejoinder, " I like it very much ! "

After this episode, Gardiner left the Conservatoire and took private lessons with Knorr. But among us young students he was ever after looked upon as a hero for having had courage enough to defy the director.

My three enjoyable years at Frankfurt had passed far too quickly ; yet not being of the genus of singers who can never make up their mind to cease studying—don't they go from one teacher to the other !—I thought it was about time for me to return to England and make some attempt at gaining my own livelihood. As my father had been generous, I naturally felt I ought not to take advantage of his generosity longer than was indispensable to my educational needs. So when, in 1898, the Conservatoire closed for the summer holidays, I resolved to take my leave for good.

And that leave-taking proved a sad and even tearful ordeal. Both my teachers had inspired in me not only gratitude, but that type of almost filial love which forms a spiritual link, and is apt to cause many heart-pangs at the moment of its severance. It is true I realised I should see my professors again, even at a not very distant date, but I also realised that the relationship would never be quite the same, and it was this feeling, no doubt, which coloured my farewell with such a marked element of the pathetic.

I already had tears in my eyes before I entered the professors' room to wish them all good-bye ; but when Knorr—his own eyes moist—put his arm round me and clasped me to his side for a moment, I broke down completely.

" Well," he said, " you are going now, and we are sorry ; but it is just as well. I, for my part, feel that

THE AUTHOR
AT 5 YEARS OF AGE

I should henceforth only be a hindrance to you instead of a help."

And then, by way of distracting my mind from my emotions, he suggested that perhaps I would like the score of an orchestral work of his which I much admired ; if so, he would walk along with me past his publisher's and get a copy.

That farewell remark of Knorr's showed the calibre of the teacher and the man through and through. He had taught us " rules," but he had taught us at the same time that such rules were only to be regarded as a means to an end : they were but devices to develop, as it were, our musical muscles, and hence should be discarded as soon as that development had been achieved. Every master composer in the past had broken old " rules " and invented new ones ; every master composer in the future would do the same. The golden rule, as Bernard Shaw has put it, is that there is no golden rule. Instead of being drowned like most of his contemporary composition teachers under the waters of technical knowledge, Knorr realised this, and enjoyingly swam on the surface, as his own works showed. Without actually being touched by the divine spark of intrinsic greatness, they exhibited a distinct and individual charm ; they were the works of a highly-evolved soul, too modest to practise the art of diplomacy for his own personal worldly advancement. Indeed, the very first resolve he made on becoming director was that none of his works should be performed in the Conservatoire. How characteristic of the man—and how different from his predecessor !

CHAPTER II

EGOTISM—AND LANDLADIES

APART from Balfour Gardiner, my co-pupils in Frankfurt were Roger Quilter, Percy Grainger, and Norman O'Neill, though the latter left fairly soon after my arrival. There are in that most agreeable town some pleasure gardens, where we often used to sit discussing musical politics, while we consumed *Wiener Schnitzel*, and listened to the strains of a very passable orchestra. Sometimes we were joined by a diminutive amateur playwright and philosopher, who, being some ten years our senior, took the favourable opportunity to lay down the law on a subject about which we all agreed—securely behind his back, of course—that he knew absolutely nothing. The particular bee in *his* bonnet buzzed to the tune of Mozart ; he fanatically and thumpingly asseverated that he (Mozart) was the last great musician, and that since his demise nobody had known how to orchestrate or, musically speaking, how to do anything at all. Wagner was a mere contemptible thunderer, and even Beethoven of little or no value. This philosophising gentleman was, in fact, one of those curiosities of musical dilletantism which are so frequently to be met with, his object unconsciously being to justify his own limitations by intricate bombastic arguments which took hours to make and left his listeners unconvinced of everything at the end, except that he was an intolerable bore.

Fortunately, there were times when our pessimist was conveniently engaged, and we were thus left in peace to discuss our own ideals, and indulge in those

flights of egotism to which boys of nineteen and twenty are prone. I believe, however, as I look back, that I was the worst culprit in this respect, though Percy Grainger, modest and charming as he is now, was not far behind me in the running.

From the first years I knew him he seemed imbued with the idea of making a sensation in the world, and entirely revolutionising music. One of his schemes was to dispense with regular rhythm and bâton-waving conductors, and to substitute yards and yards of tape on which music should be written and from which orchestral players were to play as it passed through a certain space on specially-designed music-desks—something after the manner of the pianola; the whole thing to be worked by machinery. But this was not all; it was essential to his scheme that the whole orchestra, including himself, should be dressed in white uniforms, for although he had no intention of conducting it in the usual way (how could he?) he would be present in the conductor's desk as a kind of glorified superintendent. As it so happens, the first part of his scheme has come about naturally through the process of evolution, for most modern composers have already dispensed with regular rhythm, but the latter part—well, I for one regard its materialisation as doubtful, as I already did at the time of its inception.

Still, through my listening to Grainger's schemes with a not too stifling amount of criticism, he was induced to listen to mine. They were of a less revolutionary type, but very definite all the same. My ideal was to invent a species of Pre-Raphaelite music, to consist mostly of common chords placed in such a way as to savour of very primitive church music, thereby, as I thought, reminding its listeners of old pictures. I even wrote a Symphony and a pretentious Magnificat along those lines, and was rewarded by exciting the admiration of both Quilter and Grainger. But, although

the Symphony was performed a year later at Darmstadt, I have since consigned both those works to the crematorium, which is the best and safest place for them.

Roger Quilter, in laudable contrast—he proved himself to be the most modest of all my *confrères*—was not tormented by "great schemes"; he was tormented by something far less intangible — his landladies! With a quite individual type of wit he would amuse us with the story of his adventures or rather misadventures with these acrimonious creatures, whom he unwittingly managed to offend at every turn. Being endowed with a more than ordinary amount of sympathy, he used—charming attention—to place crumbs outside his windows for the birds to eat in the winter-time; but what was his surprise one day when his landlady appeared with a very aggrieved expression and told him that he must desist from that objectionable practice, as it was most unrefined.

"The poor little birds," he said when relating the episode, "how could anybody be so idiotic as to object to my giving them a few crumbs?"

It did not dawn on him that she really meant it was not he, but the birds who were being unrefined. . . .

Of course we sympathised, though somewhat laughingly, with our friend, this being only one unpleasant episode out of many; and we felt quite at a loss to understand how anybody could behave so disagreeably to one who was the gentlest and sweetest-tempered of mortals; but we came to know later that many misunderstandings arise purely through divergence of customs and manners. There was an incident connected with a sofa, which brought this home to us.

An English fellow-student named Herbert Golden and I were invited for dinner to the house of some German acquaintances, at which the sister-in-law of

our hostess was also present. In the course of the evening we noticed that this woman not only refrained from speaking to us, but looked at us with an expression of the utmost hostility, refusing even to shake hands when we said good-bye. As this behaviour puzzled us considerably, we asked our host the next time we met him if he could tell us the cause. Being a good-natured sort of fellow, he laughed and replied with two words: "The sofa!" We looked at each other enquiringly.

"The sofa," he exclaimed, "is the seat of honour reserved for ladies; you two gentlemen sat upon it the whole evening—Frau X. was mortally offended. . . ."

It is possible that poor, unsuspecting Quilter had at times sat—if not actually, yet metaphorically—upon the sofa: certainly the episode of the bowl which he gave as a valedictory present to one of his landladies was not without an element of mystery. I had gone with him to buy that bowl, which was made of some new and elegant metal, showing neither the insignia of cheapness nor bad taste. Yet Quilter afterwards learnt that the recipient had taken it back to the shop, exchanged it for something else, and told a number of people that Herr Q. had given her a present which was not genuine (*echt*). After this he made other domicilial arrangements.

My own experiences with German landladies were of a different nature. The first landlady was a Fräulein D., who had either had the courage or the misfortune to bring a natural son—curious expression, as if all sons were not natural—into the world. I remember that while I was away on my summer holidays, she took the opportunity to die, and I was left in ignorance of the event until my return. I had actually, after letting myself into the flat with my key, unpacked my trunk, before the woman from overhead came and told me the news.

I can never think of Fräulein D. without being reminded of the Parisian cabby who, having loudly sworn at a taxi-driver for nearly bumping into him, completed the relief to his feelings with: "*Bonjour, et mes compliments à Mademoiselle votre mère!*"

My next landlady, or rather pair of landladies, were also unmarried, but rather less unconventional. They were two dear old women—very "dear" and very old. In fact, the English chaplain's son, Mr Henry Mackenzie, who came with me to interview them, said he would be very chary of taking their rooms, as one of them looked like a mediæval witch who might come and do me a mischief—but he was Scotch, and perhaps more superstitious than I. At any rate I took the rooms, for which I paid the very modest sum of forty-five marks a month, with breakfast, and eventually had every reason to be well pleased with my decision. The old "witch" turned out not only to be harmless, but exceedingly kind and thoughtful for my welfare. I remember, whenever she entered my room, she would put her head on one side, rather like a dog, look at my hired grand piano, and remark: "But Herr Shcott, what a magnificent instrument you have."

There is one episode relating to this time with which I have often regaled my friends. Having just completed a 'cello sonata, I had asked Herman Sandby, who was then a pupil of Hugo Becker's, and has since become well known in America and elsewhere, to come and try it over with me. It was interlarded with a good many pizzicato effects—though there were also cantilene passages—and these must have considerably puzzled my landladies who were listening in the adjoining room, for after Sandby had departed, the younger accosted me as I was about to leave the house.

"Ach, Herr Shcott," she said, "I want to ask you something."

I bent down to her, since she was very small and cottage-loaf-like in her stoutness—also a set of ill-fitting artificial teeth interfered with the clearness of her enunciation.

" My sister and I, namely," she proceeded, " have had a little dispute. What for an instrument was that which the gentleman brought ? My sister maintains it was a fiddle, but I maintain it was either a mandoline or the bagpipes ! " (*Dudelsack*).

I explained to her politely that none of the three surmises had been correct ; and when I got into the street, burst out laughing, to my intense embarrassment and to the astonishment of passers-by ; but really a Sonata for Pianoforte and Bagpipes struck me as the most comical of all musical possibilities.

I cannot remember how long I stayed with these old ladies, but the last spring of my student-days in Frankfurt I decided to spend at Cronberg in the Taunus—those romantic mountains some forty-five minutes by rail. Here I took rooms in the Bathing Establishment (*Bade Anstalt*) owned by a homely and affable man and his wife, who added to their financial resources by the forcing of strawberries—for, in spite of its grandiloquent name, the " establishment " merely consisted of a cottage with three shanties attached, in which were three perfectly ordinary metal baths. It is true that I had to go into Frankfurt for lessons, but that caused me no great inconvenience, as I contrived to arrange them in such a way that they only fell on two days in the week.

Cronberg is a beautiful, mediæval-looking village, its cottages clustering round a highly-perched ruin, reminding one of the feudal system to which it obviously owes its origin. In the vicinity are woods, orchards, sloping meadows with an abundance of wild flowers, streams fringed with forget-me-nots—in a word, everything which delights the soul of a nature-loving poet. There are, it must be added, several villas of rich

Frankfurters which tend to give a wrong note to the general rural harmony; but fortunately they are all on one side of the village, as is also the late Empress Frederick's none too picturesque castle, so that from where I lived they were not visible. On the contrary, from my garden arbour I had an uninterrupted view of the sloping valley, crowned by the ruin of Falkenstein on the distant hill.

But in spite of this rural beauty I should have felt somewhat lonely, had not Grainger, who was almost a trick rider, bicycled out to see me once or twice a week; and those hours we spent together on such occasions were magical hours indeed. I had the youthful pleasure (long since departed from me) of showing him my latest piece of work and of hearing his enthusiasm—unaccountable though it seems now. Often we used to go for long rambles, during which he would divest himself of his shoes and socks, and paddle in the streams, while I looked on; for I was less enthusiastic over that form of sport than he. But then he had just discovered Walt Whitman, and was imbued with the idea of living up to his, shall we say, athletic philosophy; while I, for my part, was a worshipper of that very different type of poet, Ernest Dowson, and more inclined to dream of pale nuns and Horatian courtesans than of brawny sunburnt bodies.

But of that, later on.

Perhaps the most astonishing feature in Grainger's make-up at the time was his capacity for eating cakes: I have seen him polish off ten Berlin pancakes for his tea alone, and without noticeably bad effects.

Sometimes Quilter would come out to Cronberg too. He had there some acquaintances who owned villas to which I was now and then invited. On the first of these occasions, I spent a very enjoyable afternoon; but on the subsequent one, an invasion of visitors from the Empress Frederick's castle caused a very

unpleasant transformation in our hostess, much to Quilter's embarrassment and disgust.

There was another visitor to my retreat—though an infrequent one—the poet Stefan George. I had met him at the rooms of my colleague Clemens von Franckenstein, on whom he had called one Sunday afternoon, and later on he had invited us to his house at Bingen on the Rhine. Although eleven years my senior, he came to take a very friendly interest in me, and ended in producing a most marked effect upon my inner artistic life. Both in appearance and manner, Stefan George was the most striking and unusual personality I have ever encountered, and I have met several poets in the course of my forty-five years. His features might best be described as an admixture of the young Henry Ainley and the immortal Florentine, Dante Alighieri; in a word, he *was* not only a great poet, but *looked* one—a thing not to be said of many. It was through the instrumentality of this man that my first big orchestral work came to be performed in Darmstadt. I write *big*, but what I really mean is *long*—for, as already mentioned, it has since been consigned to the void. Why Darmstadt and not Frankfurt, where I studied, should have taken pity on my youthful efforts, was largely due to the magnetic influence of Stefan George, together with the fact that his intimate friend Karl Wolfskehl (another poet) was the son-in-law of Willem de Haan, the conductor at that time of the Darmstadt opera. So that although Herr de Haan, when I called on him and played the work on the piano, owned that some of it was a little too "modern" for his taste, he nevertheless agreed to include it in his next season's programme; partly, I feel sure, out of friendship for Stefan George, and partly because he was too broad-minded a man to let his own limitations, as he modestly called them, stand in the way.

Stefan George imbued me with the doctrines—

truisms nowadays, but novel to me then—that no artist worthy of the name ever writes for the public, but solely for art itself; that every artist should be pleased when he receives adverse criticism, for to be too easily understood shows one not to be *worth* understanding. He also awakened in me a taste for poetry, and introduced me to the poems of Ernest Dowson, which he had latterly discovered and greatly admired. He quite rightly maintained that the musician who only cared for music and neglected other branches of art and learning would only end in being a very poor composer; and although I was reading a good deal of science and philosophy at the time, this was not enough, I must study poets and painters as well.

The effect of my introduction to Ernest Dowson's poems was remarkable. Previous to that, poetry had not interested me in the least, but henceforward it became almost a passion, though for many years I could find no other English poet to appeal to me—I say advisedly *English*, because the works of Stefan George himself touched me very deeply. I even later on translated some of them into English, and they were published by Elkin Mathews. The most happy of these translations appeared, however, not in the Mathews volume, but in a book of my own poems entitled *The Celestial Aftermath*, and published by Chatto & Windus. I reprint that poem here, in order to give some idea of my friend's literary powers.

" You say how gaily foliage-girt are rocks and moundings,
Yet lead, as if through ruin-heaps, the way :
I hear but death-bells from the joyous valleys sounding,
You sing a song amid the flow'r array.

Those who were loth to tarry, yet in tears departed,
Enhaunt me, when your smiling eyes I meet :
O take me back—'neath my inflamed distress, faint-hearted,
I dread avowals in this noon-tide heat.

Already strength nigh fails me to withhold, while bleeding,
That you, for self-weal, me to death betrayed :
I will be thankful for the moments, fast receding,
That you seemed fair, and still my spirit swayed.

Farewell, you will not see me, when in woe and weakness
My gaze, with moisture blinded, closes cold ;
Nor when the setting sun, behind the flat-land bleakness,
Within the dull blue sheds its deepmost gold."

CHAPTER III

FIRST ORCHESTRAL VENTURE

AFTER the attractions of Germany and student-life, I found the uneventful atmosphere of my home a very irksome one, and must confess that I—discreditably—made no attempt to hide the fact from my parents. In Oxton there was neither music nor artistic society of any kind, and had it not been for some Swiss friends in Liverpool whom I frequently visited, I should have found my life quite unendurable. . . . I had met Mr and Mrs Hans Lüthy at Mrs Tom Fletcher's, a French-American who for many years had kept open house—especially for musicians; and as the Lüthys themselves were both ardent music-lovers, they came to take a benevolent interest in my career. Having cultivated artists of every kind, they leniently and laudably put up with their freakish ways, and although Mr Lüthy was a man of business, he possessed at least a theoretical understanding of the so-called artistic temperament, which was more than my unhappy parents did. Indeed, I caused them a considerable amount of worry by my unpleasant eccentricities. I had come back from Germany with very arrogant ideas, which I tactlessly flaunted in front of my father and mother. Dividing humanity into two classes, artists and *bourgeois*, I implied that the artists were the salt of the earth, and the *bourgeois*—a mere necessary evil; and although my father did not take my actual ideas very seriously, he was perturbed by the conceit which was largely their cause. Thus many were the consultations he had with Mr Lüthy in order to discuss

what method should be pursued for the cure of this distressing moral disease; and I understand that Mr Lüthy advised him simply to exercise patience and indulgence, as he felt sure *time* would bring about the desired effect. He also emphasised the notion that geniuses (!) were different from other beings, and hence a great many allowances should be made for them.

Yet, if my youthful but ridiculous and quite uncalled-for arrogance exercised my father's mind, it was more my personal vanity which exercised my mother's. What on earth, she lamented, would her friends think of me? My ties were "fantastic pieces of architecture," and my hair, instead of being the neat, closely-cropped head-covering of a respectable citizen, was the proverbial lion's mane, without the justification of the "lion." There even came a day when in desperation my mother said: "I really believe if I offered you a hundred pounds, you wouldn't cut your hair!"

But all she got in answer was: "I'm an artist, so why should I look like a business-man? What would you think of your vicar if he chucked away his clerical clothes and appeared in a loud tweed suit?"

"That is quite different," she protested.

"I fail to see it," was my rejoinder as I left the room.

Of course I quite realise I was very selfish and *ought* to have cut my hair, since it gave rise to so much annoyance; but at that period I thought it was my mother who was in the wrong, and that she was merely being *bourgeois* and narrow-minded. I believe now that I *did* look ridiculous, and that my hair *was* far too long. Even at the present day, it is not exactly short, but the underlying motive is different. When I did, later on, cut my hair, it was only to make the discovery that I had an unusually small head, which excited the adverse criticism of candid friends. The result was that they urged me to let my hair grow again. There is also my wife, who threatens me with divorce

proceedings if I either go bald or try to emulate the neatness of a rat's back. . . .

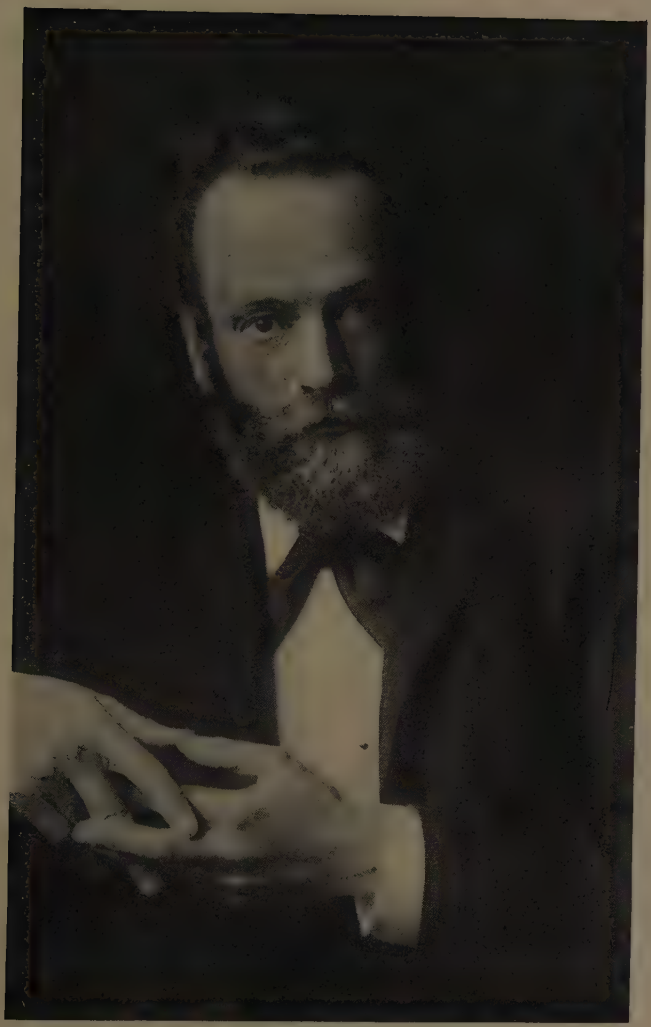
It had been arranged that I should go to Germany the following autumn for the performance of my symphony; which reminds me that a friend of my mother's had called one day, and in the course of conversation remarked:

"I saw your son this morning walking along Bidston Road. He seemed very pensive—I suppose he was thinking of his *piece* which is going to be performed at Darmstadt!"

But she was wrong; I was far more likely thinking of other *pieces* I wished to compose, and for which I could not find the necessary ideas; even one's Muse can at times be caustive. Her naïve remark nevertheless wounded my sensitive vanity. Oh, these *bourgeois*, I thought, why was I born in such a place and into such a *milieu*?

It was with intense relief that I set foot in Germany again a few days prior to the performance of my symphony. Quilter was still in Frankfurt, also Grainger with his delicate and self-sacrificing mother. Yet there was one *contretemps* which marred the joyousness of those first few days. We found that the copyist to whom I had sent my orchestral score—*and* a certain amount of money—had failed to complete his work, so that although there were only two days before the first rehearsal, at least half the parts had still to be copied. And as the delinquent almost tearfully owned that he could not possibly complete the work in the prescribed time, Grainger and I had to sit up all night and perform this unspeakably tiresome task.

Although Herr de Haan conducted the first two rehearsals, it was arranged that I should conduct the final one and the performance itself, but before I took up the bâton, Herr de Haan had requested me to say a few friendly words to the orchestra; he reminded



HERR WILLEM DE HAAN
WHO CONDUCTED THE AUTHOR'S FIRST SYMPHONY
IN DARMSTADT

me that I was a very young man, and that they were about to play my first venture in orchestral writing. It was a disconcerting request; I had never made a speech before, my command of German was limited, I was quite unprepared and appallingly nervous. The result was that I merely managed to stammer a few words which in their absurd restrictedness caused me to blush:

"*Ich möchte Ihnen danken*," I said, "*dass Sie mein Werk spielen—also—ich danke Ihnen!*"[1]

They all looked at me glumly without even a suspicion of a smile; then I tapped on the desk, and we commenced.

But although with considerable energy I waved my arms to and fro in the air, the sounds produced from that body of players bore no resemblance whatever to my symphony—for all one could tell they might still have been tuning their instruments. They looked at me, it is true, but the more they looked, the more bewildered they became. It was useless for me to glance at Herr de Haan for some light on the matter—he sat in immovable discomfiture in the corner of the room, his face shaded by his hand. I was dumfounded; and, in the hopes of bringing my players into line, waved my arms about even more energetically than before, but all to no purpose. Then, with a burning face I realised the truth—I had never learnt to beat time!

"Gentlemen," I said at last, "it is no good—I can't conduct"; and with that I descended from my perch and appealed to Herr de Haan. "I must leave it to you," I said, wiping my brow.

"Perhaps it *would* be safer and more advantageous for the performance," he replied tactfully.

There was quite a little gathering of my friends for the actual performance. Mr Lüthy came all the way

[1] "I want to thank you for playing my work—well, then—I thank you!"

from Liverpool, Roger Quilter, Balfour Gardiner, Iwan Knorr, and, of course, Percy Grainger from Frankfurt, and Stefan George from Bingen. And certainly the symphony was well played, and what is more, gained at the end the distinction of being applauded by one half of the audience and hissed by the other half, both the approval and the disapproval being loud and prolonged. Herr de Haan reappeared, stood erect, looked embarrassed and quite at a loss to know whether he should bow or not. The applause increased, so did the hissing; it was an awkward moment for any conductor, and a still more awkward one for the guilty party, sitting huddled up in a box out of sight.

"One ought to play that to the Boers,"[1] Gardiner overheard someone say, "then they'd run as far as the Equator."

Yet I was pleased on the whole with the reception of my symphony. Had not Stefan George inculcated me beforehand with his doctrines? Besides which, Knorr, whose opinion meant more to me than anybody else's, told one of my friends that my handling of the orchestra was remarkable; he added another complimentary sentence which I prefer not to repeat. As to the newspapers, two of them loaded my work with abuse, saying it was the composition of a mere student and should never have been included in the programme, since works of that type endangered the dignity of the Opera-concerts; the third praised it out of all proportion to its merits—said that so far England had produced no great composer, but that he (the writer) saw in me the possible musical Messiah. . . .

In any case, the net result was to inspire the conductor of the Symphony Concerts at the Frankfurt Palmengarten with the desire to give the work a performance, and I accordingly arranged to prolong my

[1] It was the time of the Boer War.

stay in Germany in order to be present. Meanwhile I spent three stimulating weeks with Grainger and his mother—who treated me almost as a son—stimulating, because his own compositions were beginning to excite my admiration as they have done ever since, and consequently to goad me on to fresh efforts. He had composed a song with words by Kipling and an English Dance for orchestra, which gave me the most pronounced musical thrills I had experienced since my introduction to "*Die Götterdämmerung*." In exchange, for it will have become evident that we constituted a mutual admiration society, I gave him thrills—to use our own phrase at that period—with an overture to *Pelleas and Melisande* I had just completed, and with some songs composed to Dowson's words. The *Magnificat* was also brought out from the depths of my trunk, and at Grainger's request played on the piano—with an obligato of whistling, humming, etc.—to various musical friends who turned up for tea or supper at the Pension where we were staying. And the verdict of these people was nearly always the same: that I was then going through the *Sturm und Drang* (storm and stress) period from which they felt sure I would soon emerge. Yet that their opinion was hardly correct is proved by the fact that I have since destroyed those works, not because they were stormy and discordant, but because they were immaturely mild and obvious. Only one song out of the batch of more pretentious compositions seems to have been less tarnished by the dust of time—"April Love," published by Metzler & Co. I regard this song as the happiest effort of those immature days; but for various reasons it is not so well known as many of my songs of far less merit.

I was awaiting the second performance of my symphony, and was requested by Herr Kämpfert, the conductor, to present myself at nine o'clock one morning at the Palmengarten for the rehearsal. But although

I got up early and set out on a bleak, wet morning for the hall, I found there no orchestra—merely a charwoman dusting the chairs.

"Isn't there a rehearsal here this morning?" I asked.

"Not that *I* know of," she replied.

With an unpleasant sinking sensation in my stomach, I began to think that I must have made a mistake in the time. Perhaps I had misunderstood Herr Kämpfert. Then I saw an attendant approaching with a note in his hand. "Are you Herr Shcott?" he asked.

I nodded assent.

"Please—" he said, handing me the note.

It was to the effect that, for reasons I have forgotten, there could be neither rehearsal *nor* performance.

I turned and went dejectedly through the cold wind and rain to my Pension. They might at least have sent the note to my address, I thought, instead of treating me with such scant ceremony. What a bore it was to be young! If only I had been middle-aged, I imagined that things would be very different. . . .

Yet, if Herr Kämpfert failed to give my symphony a hearing, he did perform my overture to *Pelleas* some weeks later, and Herr de Haan, with characteristic kindness, came over for the performance. This time there were no hisses—even though the English at that moment were far from popular.

MELCHIOR LECHTER

CHAPTER IV

LITERARY CIRCLE IN BERLIN

AFTER the performance of my *Pelleas and Melisande* overture I intended to leave immediately for Berlin; but was laid up for a fortnight with an inexplicable illness, so had to postpone my journey. I say inexplicable because from that attack, which lasted a fortnight or more, originated those headaches which, to a greater or lesser degree, have troubled me ever since, and have been responsible for many misunderstandings of my general demeanour on the part of chance acquaintances. But I will not elaborate this theme at the present juncture; I shall have something to say later when I come to my adventures in search of a cure.

It was at the suggestion of Stefan George that I set out for Berlin on what he termed a diplomatic mission. I was to reap the political benefits of an *entrée* into his own particular circle, my justification being that I had set some poems of his called the "Spielmanns Lieder" in a manner which awakened his admiration. Those verses, it is true, had been set by others before, but their settings had failed to produce the atmosphere he desired—an atmosphere savouring of the Pre-Raphaelite.

The first introduction he effected for me was to a painter, designer, and stained-glass window artist named Melchior Lechter; and I shall not forget my impressions when, one sunny afternoon, I entered his flat for the first time: it was exactly like entering a church. In all the rooms, excepting the studio,

were stained-glass windows and furniture of the most ecclesiastical appearance I have ever seen outside a Lady Chapel ; to give the final touch, there was a faint smell of incense. I felt as if I ought to speak in whispers, never laugh, and in fact conduct myself in every way as if I actually had been in church ; and apparently I did thus conduct myself, to the extent of being tedious. It was useless for Stefan George, who was present, to try and rouse me into some semblance of my natural self—I failed to react. But I made up for it when, after the visit was over, we walked along the street ; for so much of my " naturalness " reasserted itself that, forgetting all tact, I told Stefan George, much to his annoyance, that I considered his friend's taste in dwellings a most sickly and comfortless one. But that I very soon came to alter my opinion is shown by the fact that my own house bears as close a resemblance to Lechter's in atmosphere as it has been possible for me to produce. I have since those days developed a passion for stained-glass windows and Gothic furniture, and am greatly puzzled as to why, to one who was so enthralled by Pre-Raphaelite pictures, they failed to appeal from the first.

Yet, if I did not then care for Lechter's flat, I very soon came to care for Lechter himself. His child-like manner, his equally child-like impatience, and his resemblance to a well-nourished priest—though he is a strict vegetarian—endear him to the hearts of all his friends. By temperament a mystic and an occultist, he spends his spare time in studying metaphysics which have had a marked effect upon his art—an exalted and inspired one, indeed. His windows are the most superb modern examples of stained glass I have seen anywhere.

It may seem curious that so close a friendship should spring up between a mere boy of twenty and a man some fifteen years his senior ; but as it happened,

Lechter at that time was reaping the aftermath of a very peculiar and painful love-affair with an English girl, and thought that a man of the same nationality might be able to throw some light on what seemed to be a very enigmatical character. That he came to be disappointed in this naïve hope, requires no telling. Fortunately there existed a firmer basis for our friendship than my supposed acquaintance with feminine temperamental mysteries—there was Lechter's passion for music, and eventually for my own efforts in that domain. He not only saw in my compositions something pleasantly foreign to the Teutonic mind, but I presented him with the first *English* music he had ever heard. I remember playing him a string quartet I had recently composed.

"That," he said when I had finished, "has in it the divine touch of immortality!"

Encouraging remark. . . . Yet that particular quartet exists no longer. I sent it to a certain violinist in Manchester, and either he lost it or it got lost in the post. In any case I bear him no ill-will—he saved me the trouble of burning the work, which was an immature one.

Of course, Melchior Lechter was not the only member of the Stefan George circle whom I was destined to meet; there were many others: poets, *littérateurs*, a well-known portrait-painter named Lepsius, and several dilletantes. I also met a number of people who did not belong to the George circle, but were more especially friends of Lechter. On one occasion I dined at the house of a noted professor, next to whose wife I sat at table. In the course of a conversation on music she turned to me and said:

"I'm going to make a dreadful confession."

"Really?" I asked; "of what nature?"

"Do you know, I don't *very* much care for Mozart. . . ."

"Oh, that's nothing," was my off-hand reply, "I don't care for Beethoven."

There was a disconcerting pause, almost of horror—then it passed round the table that this stripling of an Englishman had *dared* to dislike Beethoven. But even prior to that I had *dared* elsewhere to say things of an equally shocking nature, so that altogether the Stefan George circle came to regard me as an unusually outspoken young man who lacked the much admired quality of *reverence*; and whose tongue, although at certain times and in the right circumstances might be permitted amusingly to wag, at others required very strict curbing. There even arrived a day when Stefan George found my tactlessness a little too inconvenient to be tolerated, and begged me not to cross his path again; a request which caused me some suffering, since at that time I admired him more than any man I knew. The breach, however, did not prove to be unmendable; it only lasted a few years, and luckily did not involve my friendship with Lechter.

In the early spring of that year I left Berlin to return to my family at Oxton; but as there was business to attend to, I broke my journey at my aunt and uncle's, Mr and Mrs Thomas Griffiths, then living in a gigantic and unmanageable house overlooking Clapham Common. I always enjoyed a visit to these relations of mine; they were both in their own way such distinct personalities. My aunt was imposingly stout, had a very pale face upon which she bestowed a liberal abundance of powder, a nose of the *retroussé* type, and hair—well, it would have been white, had she not preferred that it should be auburn; or, better said, it was originally auburn and she had cut off a portion which she now wore as a plaited chignon on the top of her head; the remainder she "matched" with a little artificial aid. In manner she contrived to combine a pronounced degree of haughtiness with an equally pronounced degree of general kindliness.

MRS. THOS. GRIFFITHS
THE AUTHOR'S AUNT

In short, I might describe her as the proverbial duchess *minus* the title: she acted, moved, spoke, complimented like duchesses in Victorian novels; even her habit of lamenting over the fatigues and boredom of the London season, was characteristic; yet, not only did she appear at every party to which she was invited, but she would be among the first to arrive and the last to go. Some people called her insincere—and so she was; but hers was an entertaining kind of insincerity, and not an objectionable one.

My uncle was very different in every way, except one: he also dyed his hair, *and* his beard. He was six feet in height, very slender, remarkably active for his seventy years, and extremely witty. Having been something of an inventor in the domain of chemistry, he had at one time made a considerable amount of money, but had lost much of it later on. I was told that he was the original inventor of enamel paint, which may well have been the case, but I never inquired very closely into the matter. I only know that in his house, "The Cedars," there was a room which looked exactly like a chemist's shop, and from which very objectionable odours used to arise and permeate the remainder of the house. In spite of his scientific studies, my uncle was exceedingly, but rather unintelligently pious, which might be seen from the type of religious periodical he was in the habit of reading, especially on Sundays. Moreover, he was constantly going to church, to prayer-meetings, to the Keswick Convention, and to missionary gatherings—activities which caused me, in those my days of religious and other intolerances, to regard this side of him with a certain contemptuous pity. Even his wife shared my view; she would remark with a sigh: "Church-going for *him* is simply a dissipation."

Although, to use an Americanism, I *enjoyed* my aunt and uncle themselves, my stay at their house was not without its drawbacks. In their palatial drawing-

room they frequently gave parties of a very distressing nature. For one thing their piano, which, like children, ought to have been seen but not heard, was being continually opened for me to play; and worse still, for me to accompany "singers" whose efforts bore so little resemblance to singing that the tears poured down my cheeks on to my quivering shirt-front, while I was trying to read their atrocious accompaniments. But my aunt was persistently pitiless. "Now, dear Mr So-and-so," she would implore, "you used to sing *so* beautifully, you really *must* give us that pleasure —just to please *me*—for the sake of old times—you surely can't refuse. . . ."

And the poor old gentleman would protest, say it was quite impossible, that his voice was completely gone, that he knew it was only her kindness which made her ask such a thing, but that really he couldn't . . .

His protests, however, were useless; she cajoled, she insisted, she poured forth another stream of compliments; the unfortunate man was vanquished—and "sang" . . .

It was well for me that parties were merely afternoon and evening functions, otherwise my stay in town would have been an unproductive one. As it was, I managed to visit a number of useful people, especially a Mr Leonard Bevan, to whom Quilter introduced me, and who in turn gave me other useful introductions. Through him I made the acquaintance of Mr William Leslie, then chairman of Messrs Broadwood, and his kindness to me is unforgettable; though I confess with shame that I took advantage of it, and would repeatedly and thoughtlessly call on him to ask his advice without much consideration for his valuable time.

I remember on one occasion he introduced me to Mr Hipkins, an affable old gentleman with a stutter, and the oldest member of the Broadwood firm.

" You remind me of Sh-sh-sh-sh-Chopin," he said, after shaking hands; " I knew him p-p-p-p-personally."

And strange to say this is not the only time a similar remark has been made to me. When many years later I was taken to lunch with the old Baroness Rothschild, in Frankfurt, she told me that even my touch reminded her of the Polish composer, one of whose pupils she had been. . . . But then old people are liable to have fancies : I only wish I had half the genius of Chopin !

On returning home to Oxton, I began to make serious preparations for the gaining of my livelihood. It was thought advisable that I should settle down in the neighbouring city of Liverpool, give a pianoforte recital, and then set up as a teacher ; and my friends Mr and Mrs Lüthy encouraged me in this scheme. Mr Lüthy, at that time, had far greater confidence in my ability as a pianist than as a composer. His especial delight was to hear me play Bach, which he considered I played better than anything, or for that matter, anybody else. But if the truth be known, what he imagined to be Bach was very often merely an improvised imitation ; I could sit down and play " that sort of Bach " by the hour without his being any the wiser. I, moreover, scandalously allowed him to compliment me on my phenomenal memory, without making any attempt to undeceive him ; only after many years did I tell him the truth.

The recital was planned to take place in the autumn and was to be of the stereotyped kind, to begin with Bach and end with Liszt. Not that I admired the latter composer, in connection with whom I would often cite Nietzsche's caustic aphorism : " Liszt, or the school of runs—after ladies . . ." ; but in those days to give a recital and fail to end with one of his rhapsodies was not, in my opinion, to do pianistically the correct thing. I therefore had to set about practising my programme, which was also to include a Beethoven

Sonata, some Chopin, and a work of my own. I had previously never practised more than two hours a day, if even that; but now for those few months I practised four, and made my back ache unbearably in consequence. That my studious father endured all this noise without murmuring, only goes to prove the nobility of his character—especially as he had no interest in music whatsoever. My mother, on the other hand, was fond of music of a certain type—that which she termed "something lively"; yet lest I seem to be casting unflattering aspersions on her, I should add that it was hardly possible for a woman who had lived all her life in a totally unmusical *milieu* to possess tastes other than she did. And in one sense it was well so; the more I think over it, the more I realise how happy I was in the choice of my parents. What would have happened had I been, say, the son of Sir John Stainer, or some other academically minded composer? Then it would not only have been my long hair which would have caused such parental chagrin, but my discords as well—a far more serious matter. Might not my father have offered me a hundred pounds to write exclusively in common chords? As it was, he *gave* me a hundred pounds instead, and told me to take rooms in Liverpool, give my recital, and await results.

And as far as applause, audience, and good criticisms went, my recital was a success. A large part of the congregation of my mother's church, including the vicar, Canon Robson, came over to it, and Mr Lüthy collected a number of friends, so that the hall was filled to its fullest capacity; but that the majority of people had merely gone from mixed motives of kindness, personal interest, and curiosity, I feel sure. I may mention that I was distressingly nervous.

But in spite of its success, this recital brought me exactly two pupils and one benevolent elderly gentleman whom I met at Mrs Fletcher's, and who paid

me ten-and-six an hour to play Bach to him once a week. Why the harvest in pupils should have been so meagre may be accounted for by my extreme youth, but hardly by the reason which Sir—then Mr—Landon Ronald suggested many years later when I sought for composition pupils in London.

"Why, my *dear* fellow," he said, "people think you don't know the rules, so how on earth can you be expected to teach them . . . ?"

CHAPTER V

A FRENCH POET

I HAD hit upon some very unsatisfactory " digs " in Liverpool. It is a bad policy to take rooms in the house of people who have known " better days," have never let rooms before, and yet would " do anything to make one comfortable." Their intentions may be good, but they do not know how to fulfil them ; especially if in addition they are ashamed of letting rooms at all. But victim of this bad policy as I was, I could have put up with my apartmental discomforts had not my landlady broken her promise, made when I took the rooms, that she would not permit any other piano-playing in the house besides my own. Indeed, I had only been there a few weeks, during which I was at work on a concerto, when to my exasperation I heard the sound of a piano from the very next room : a young foreigner with pianistic tastes had been taken as a paying guest. Why in the circumstances I did not then and there threaten to give notice, was solely because I detest anything approaching a scene. As it was, whenever he played *his* piano, I played mine all the louder, so as to drown his sounds, against which, of course, it was impossible to compose ; I also punished my landlady by thus being partly responsible for regaling her with music " for four hands " of a nature too discordant to be agreeable.

It was during my stay in these rooms that I received a visit from Mr Augustus John, who was then living in Liverpool. But without wishing to be impolite, I cannot pretend I enjoyed that visit ; until that day I

had never met any man with such a pronounced talent for keeping silent, and the discovery embarrassed me. He sat and studied my physiognomy for something like half an hour, but neither commented upon *it*, nor upon anything else : the effect was disconcerting in the extreme. True, most people talk too much, especially women, who, to quote the old jingle, " are, generally speaking, generally speaking " ; but after all there *is* a happy medium !

About this time an event of national importance occurred : the death of Queen Victoria. I was on my way to visit my old tutor, Mr C. H. Jeaffreson, who lived near by, when through the raw, smoky winter air I heard the evening-paper boys shouting the news. When I arrived at my tutor's I found his daughter almost in tears, and Mr Jeaffreson himself remonstrating with her for being so sentimental. " Really, you might have been a close personal friend of the Queen," he was saying, " by the way you go on." " I almost feel as if I had been," was the reply. For my own part, I entertained very few sentiments on the subject of Royalty. Having been brought up with the idea that the Queen was a very good woman who read her Bible every day and fulfilled the duties of her office very efficiently, I had thought no more about her. Yet the news of her passing produced in me a curious sensation, which might best be described as a feeling of insecurity, rather than anything more personal— I was a little apprehensive as to the future of England under the next sovereign. After all, apart from the Boer War, nothing very catastrophic had happened during *my* experience of Queen Victoria's reign ; but I had a vague premonition that something dire *might* happen when she had gone. Is it far-fetched to say that thirteen years later my premonition proved correct ?

Occasionally, when I called on my tutor, I found him in the throes of correcting examination papers, some

of which contained such absurd answers that he would chuckle and read them out, first commenting on the utter confusion that reigned in the schoolboy mind. " This youngster," he said, " must be a little glutton who perceives everything through his palate : only a glutton could imagine that ' Oliver Cromwell was born in Bath, was noted for his love of biscuits, and invented the Bath Oliver.' There is no need for me to puzzle my brains what to do with that answer. But some of the rest are less easy to deal with. Here is one which informs me among other things that ' Abraham was noted for his bosom, to which a man named Dives went when he died, because he was poor. . . .' What the devil is a wretched examiner to do with *that* ? In one sense it happens to be true ! "

I sympathised with his difficulty, but had no suggestion to offer.

Many years afterwards I found myself in similar difficulties, having been asked to set some musical examination papers of varying grades. But " never again," I said to myself when the answers arrived, though my friends and I got a good deal of amusement out of some of them. One young lady informed me that " Handel was the finest British composer. He was noted for his great produce ; composed two hundred oratorios, and had twenty-three children. The chief one was called The Messiah. . . ." Even nowadays there are still people who regard Handel, as they call him (it ought to be Händel) as an Englishman. Of course this young lady was partly confounding him with Bach ; it was he who had twenty-three children and only £40 a year salary wherewith to keep them—wretched man ! In answer to another question I put, or to be accurate, was requested to put—state the names of some celebrated English singers—one person maintained that " the greatest singer of all was Florence Nightingale, *for* "—please note the conjunction—" she had gone out to the Crimea to sing to the soldiers,

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and even now, though seventy years old, could still fill the Albert Hall." My tutor had deplored the confusion that reigns in the minds of *schoolboys*, but really. . . .

I had recently met at the University Club, where I took my meals, Dr Charles Bonnier, at that time Professor of French Literature at the Liverpool University. He was about forty-seven, stoutishly built, had round cheeks, a square-cut black beard tinged with grey, and usually wore a skull cap. Why Bonnier, who, by the way, had been the friend of the poet Mallarmé and other eminent men, should have found a young and arrogant musician the least interesting, I cannot say, yet a friendship sprang up between us which had for me most significant consequences. The first of these was that, as we were both disgusted with rooms and wallpapers and landladies, after some weeks' deliberation we took a small house together in Upper Canning Street, which we decorated according to our own tastes; and I advisedly write this word in the plural, because in certain respects those tastes were widely dissimilar: mine were monastic and ascetic, Bonnier's were Parisian and almost *demi-mondain*. Such furniture as I did not have made after my own Gothic designs, I bought from church furnishers, which will at once give an idea of the appearance of my rooms. Dr Bonnier, in striking contrast, covered his walls with enormous posters by L'Autrec, portraying women in the act of high-kicking and exhibiting a vast expanse of leg and white linen "frillies"; above these posters was a frieze formed by a series of *pointilliste* sketches, executed by Bonnier in person. Finally, and incongruously in the midst of all this, there was—shall I be believed?—a large harmonium, the reason for which can only be understood with an understanding of Bonnier himself.

To begin with, he was a poet and prose writer of considerable ability; writing, in fact, was his *forte*, and

every week a long article from his pen was despatched to some French socialistic journal. Further, he drew and painted in the *pointilliste* style, as already said, and to crown all, he played the harmonium and sang at the top of his tenor voice—again shall I be believed?—the operas of Richard Wagner. He had an almost fanatical adoration for that music dramatist, and might be heard singing the *rôle* of Siegfried, Walter, or Tristan, at any moment of the day when he knew I was not at work and therefore could not be disturbed by his ecstatic outpourings.

In character he was kind, calm, thoughtful, and pronouncedly unselfish; and during the three years we were together I never once saw him angry or out of humour. He seldom made a joke, but he was the first to laugh at the jokes of others, and to laugh so heartily as to be heard all over the house. He may not have been a great painter or a great musician, but he was, which is far more, a great soul, and a great artist *in spirit*.

Though I had known Stefan George so well, and though he had talked to me so much on the æsthetics of poetry, it is not to him but to Charles Bonnier that I am indebted for my first lessons in the art of versification. It happened that one day I wanted a translation of a German lyric, and as I had no one at hand who could produce one, I made the attempt myself; and I confess the result astonished me. Hitherto I had laboured under the impression that I could hardly rhyme two words together, and the discovery of my mistake was gratifying; it opened up for me a new world of artistic activity, and from that moment I began to write lyrics and to submit them to Dr Bonnier for criticism, which, kind man that he was, he unstintingly gave. He taught me that the object of the true poet must ever be to create a new rhythm, a new melody, so to say, and in illustration he would quote Dowson's verse:

" Calm, sad, secure, behind high convent walls
These watch the sacred lamp ; these watch and pray,
And it is one with them when evening falls,
And one with them the cold return of day." [1]

How unfavourably does the banal rhythm of the following compare with it :

" The ashes here of murder'd kings
Beneath my footsteps sleep ;
And yonder lies the scene of death
Where Mary learned to weep."

For however poetical some may regard the *sense* of these lines by Walter Scott, its appeal is ruined by what might aptly be described as a barrel-organ accompaniment.

This absolute necessity, then, for unhackneyed versification I came to realise at the very outset through Bonnier's tuition ; and even one of the first poems I ever wrote gained his approval because I had carried this realisation into effect.

ANOTHER

Upon the hills we hear afar
The last sighs of the fainting eve,
And through the pines that scent the air
We mourn the day that was so fair—
We watch and grieve.

The last sighs of the fainting eve
Are gentle as your soul-lit eyes
When dews of tears such sweetness leave
That to your heart-strings I must cleave,
And yearnings rise.

As gentle as your soul-lit eyes
Are all the words I know you'd say,
Though not for me your tears arise
But for another one, who dies,
As this our day.

Yet gladly with my grief I'd pay,
So he might stay.

[1] " Nuns of the Perpetual Adoration."

Later on, while still living with Bonnier, I came to translate Baudelaire's *Fleurs du Mal* into English, and received much encouragement from Mr Arthur Symons, whom I met in London. This translation was eventually published by Elkin Mathews, and appeared at the same time as my Stefan George lyrics.

Previous to this, Mr John Sampson, librarian to the Liverpool University and Romany scholar, whose masterly editorship of William Blake made such a sensation some years ago, had become interested in my rhythmical innovations, and induced Donald Fraser of Liverpool to issue a volume of my original poems. It was called *The Shadows of Silence and The Songs of Yesterday*, and in a year's time was followed by a second volume. But as might be expected, neither of these books got a favourable reception—it was maintained that their writer could not scan! An ironical conclusion, since the trouble was that he could, if anything, scan too well. . . . Hitherto most poets had been content to write one line in unconventional metre—the first, say, of the first verse—and then relapse into conventional ones afterwards; a tolerably easy proceeding. But this was not my aim; I had, as already said, others in view, and spared no pains to achieve them. When, for example, in the first line of "Love in the Valley," Meredith wrote:

"Under yonder beech-tree, single on the green-sward,"

he was quite content to give the corresponding line in his second verse a different metre, though the same number of syllables:

"Shy as the squirrel and wayward as the swallow."

My metres, on the other hand, were consistently carried through from beginning to finish, as may be seen from the poem "Swans":

On the grey forsaken waters of the long-dead park
Soft slanting rays of late summer sunlight smile ;
All around, the overhanging trees—that ere a little while
Shed again their green sweetness for autumnal shadowed cark—
Sigh with dreamful melodies of gentle strain,
Swaying to the silver wavelets of the swans' graceful train.

In the seldom-broken stillness here the sad nuns trod ;
Pale brides of Christ that loved, yearningful for " home,"
Till amid the never-ceasing prayers that floated unto God,
One by one they sank calmly, as their Saviour whispered :
" Come,"
Then, because of failing alms the convent closed,
Leaving but the withered gardens where the gaunt hall reposed

So the sleep-enshrouded sisters 'neath the cold, green stones,
Lie waiting till the last summer sunlight wanes ;
Over each a little crumbling cross is all that now remains.
And the poet smiles wanly, murmuring in his chant-like tones,
Walks among the monuments of mould'ring bronze
As he dreams within this garden of the lost, lonely swans.

A less elaborate example is " A Summer's Day " :

Summer softness shimmers in the storm-tired skies,
Morning's radiance glimmers freshly through the mist,
And the greens of lazy fields from their sleep arise,
Fields—with the pale blue of heaven's light kissed ;
And within the morning's heart a mild sorrow sighs,
Morning's summer sorrow sighs.

Pilgrims doff their sandals where the still brook flows,
Lave their way-worn feet and say a grateful prayer ;
Scarce a distant sound there is to pierce the day's repose,
Rest—far from harsh scenes of life—reigns here,
Then around the evening's heart the soft shadows close,
Evening's summer shadows close.

I take this opportunity to mention my poetic aims, not because I wish to exploit my poetry, but merely in the hope that others, instead of writing the all-too-facile *vers libre*, may perhaps also be induced to

experiment along new metrical lines. For I cannot help feeling that a thing—namely, *vers libre*—which is too easy of accomplishment, is usually productive of poor results; it is also a breeding-ground for vain-glorious poetasters.

To our little house in Canning Street we had many visitors, among whom was that eccentric and learned Oxford don, Professor York Powell, a great friend of Bonnier's, who often visited Liverpool. But our most frequent visitor was Mr Frederic Austin, who has since achieved fame through his musical arrangement of *The Beggar's Opera* and *Polly*. Mr Austin had been my kindred spirit—musically speaking, in particular—while I was still at Oxton; and, as in those days he used to give about eighty singing lessons a week and found time for little else, he was often glad to forget his tedious labours in the discussion of musical æsthetics at our house. I believe I was instrumental—at least so he says—in weaning him of those academical tendencies which at that time formed part of his artistic tastes.

Occasionally we would receive a call from Professor M'Kay, that charming but absent-minded professor of history who, in my opinion, bore so close a resemblance to Paderewski *minus* the long hair. Of this man it is related that he once went to a dinner-party in an ordinary dress coat and waistcoat, but in a pair of brown trousers—he had transformed the upper part of his person, but had forgotten similarly to transform the lower. Whether the story be true or not, he was certainly an original; every time he met me in the club or elsewhere, he greeted me with the self-same remark: "Go ahead, my boy, go ahead, my boy, but don't overdo it, don't overdo it." Then he would chuckle in a lovable and inimitable way, and wander off into the next room. It has been my regret that since I left Liverpool I have not seen him again, nor heard that irresistible falsetto chuckle.

I have still to mention the little circle that used to foregather in Mr Lüthy's elegant drawing-room—mostly for the doubtful pleasure of hearing me play. It was here that I first met Mr Ernest Newman, then a bank-clerk, who employed his spare time in writing books on music. Here I also met the Rev. H. H. M'Cullagh and his talented daughters, who now constitute the well-known M'Cullagh Quartet. They were, in fact, the first quartet-party to play any of my chamber works in England, and in view of the temperament and finish with which even then they played, I already foresaw for them a brilliant career. Yet Mr Lüthy was not content that my music should merely be heard within the four walls of his drawing-room: he had higher ambitions for me, and made persistent endeavours to induce the Liverpool Philharmonic to perform some of my orchestral works, but without success. Although he managed to procure me an interview with Sir Frederic Cowen, who acknowledged himself ready to perform my *Pelleas* overture, the committee were of another opinion; and this in spite of our having visited one of its members who, for reasons best known to himself, persisted in calling me Mr Myer[1] throughout the visit. Mr Lüthy, however, was not to be daunted; he aimed even higher—this time at Dr Hans Richter in Manchester.

[1] My family name is Meir—pronounced Meer.

CHAPTER VI

THE APOSTLE OF NON-JEALOUSY

DURING the summer vacation Dr Bonnier invited me to spend a few days at his country house at Templeuve, in the north of France, and then suggested we should both go on to Ambleteuse and join his friend Professor York Powell and several others who congregated there in August. But as I wished to see Mrs Grainger and Percy, I decided to break the journey in London, where I stayed with Balfour Gardiner and his father. It was evident that Mr Gardiner senior—a most courteous and charming old gentleman—found his musical son as puzzling as my own father found *his*. Balfour having complained that it was impossible to work in London because of the barrel-organs, Mr Gardiner with paternal solicitude had gone to some trouble and expense to provide him with a piano at his shooting-box in the heart of the country. What was his astonishment, however, to find that his efforts had been to no purpose. "My son," he told me, "now complains that he can't work even *there*, because of the birds!"

I found the Graingers living in rooms somewhere in Kensington, but for the first twenty minutes of my visit Percy was so delightsomely preoccupied with the spectacle of three perspiring men trying to get his piano up a poky little staircase, that conversation with him was out of the question. On the other hand, Mrs Grainger—young-looking, pretty, and affectionate as always—supplied the deficiency, and told me they had now decided to settle in London for good, and that

she was doing all that was essential to further Percy's career. Mrs Grainger, beyond doubt, was a marvellous manager; fundamentally, she had but three interests in life: her son, his well-being, and his work. It is significant, as I learnt from her, that she showered love on her prospective child before it was born; for certainly the result was a well-nigh unexampled closeness of relationship between the two.

Although Percy had grown more manly in appearance since the last time I saw him, in other respects he was unchanged, especially in his speech, which was if anything more slangy and unæsthetic than it had been in the Frankfurt days. Indeed, this love of slang was proclaimed by the fact that the first composition he played to me that afternoon was entitled "A Lot of Rot for Cello and Piano." But its title, over which, of course, I expostulated with him, very much belied its content: far from being "rot," it absolutely transported me. There was a painted, powdered pathos about it, to use my own words at the time, which haunted me with its beauty for weeks afterwards. Grainger had caught something of the sad, sentimental vulgarity of the music-hall, and had embodied it in a genuine work of art. And even months later it was still the memory of this music-poem which prompted me to write my "Two Pierrot Pieces," with their atmosphere of the variety stage, though I doubt whether those who heard them were conscious of my intentions, and the full significance of the word "Pierrot" in this connection.

Having crossed to Calais on a breathless summer's day, I found Bonnier waiting to conduct me to his little village, consisting of a row of houses and a few poplars, not unpicturesque, but hardly striking enough, one would think, to warrant his having written and had printed some four hundred pages entitled *L'Histoire de Templeuve*. He had spent months and months over this book, yet was content merely to present copies

to his friends, and to take no steps whatever towards its publication. Strange man—who evidently believed not only in *l'art pour l'art*, but in *l'histoire pour l'histoire*.

I have often wondered why it is that French people seem to have an almost superstitious worship of their relations; even Bonnier, unconventional and philosophical as he was, manifested this characteristic, which I noticed for the first time while staying with him, surrounded by several generations (he had an aunt of ninety-six) at Templeuve. This national trait is also and especially noticeable when a death occurs. Twice in my life I have received missives with at least two-inch black borders from somebody I knew but slightly, announcing the death of somebody else I did not even know at all! One of these was from an eminent French singer with an Italian name, living in this country, and it announced the demise of her father-in-law, whom I not unnaturally took to be her husband—and condoled with her accordingly.

But to relate of Ambleteuse.

When we arrived at that picturesque little seaside place, as it then was, I not only found Professor York Powell—looking, by the way, like a buccaneer, with his grizzly whiskers, navy-blue jersey, and wide sailor-like trousers—but a whole congregation of well-known people: Dudley Hardy, John Hassell, Douglas Jerrold, and finally, Mrs Robert Alan Stevenson, her beautiful daughter, and a young son. Mrs R. A. S. was the widow of the art critic, whose exquisitely written book on Velasquez drew much attention to him at one time. Further, he was Robert Louis Stevenson's cousin and closest friend, and had helped considerably in the invention of those entertaining plots of the *New Arabian Nights*. Mrs R. A. Stevenson herself had known Robert Louis intimately, and related to me much about his character and doings. One thing she told me was that his impatience with anything in the nature of puritanism was so pronounced, that

nearly every one of his letters had to be expurgated before its publication : with him beauty of style was not synonymous with propriety of expression. Thus to refrain from talking about intimate things was in his opinion mere hypocrisy, and for that reason not to be tolerated. . . . It is well known that Robert Louis had strange tastes in dress ; but according to Mrs R. A. it were better said that he had no taste at all ; his dress was an accident, or more correctly, a series of accidents. As he was consumptive the doctors had told him—I fail to see why—that it was advisable to let his hair grow long ; to the remainder of his appearance he never gave a thought. One day he was to be seen walking down Piccadilly in a strange coloured mackintosh, and a very small straw hat with a pink ribbon, and at his heels a little crowd of jeering urchins whose surprise was indeed great when a number of well-dressed men, having caught sight of him from the window, rushed down the steps of the Savile Club and welcomed him with astonishing effusion.

I had hardly known Mrs Stevenson a few days before I realised what a very exceptional, large-minded, and understanding woman she was. I might even say that she struck me as unique ; for never had I encountered a woman, or man for that matter, with such, to me, novel and astounding ideas on conjugal love. She could best and most briefly be described as the apostle of *non*-jealousy ; and that she not only set forth but had lived up to her beliefs, I very soon had reason to know. With her own husband she had lived in perfect harmony, love, and comradeship, but this, she told me, had not precluded her from falling in love with other men, nor him from falling in love with other women ; and instead of that sordid mutual deception which at such times arises in the ordinary marital relationship, the very opposite had been the case. This truly united couple not only had confided in one another without the least apprehension on either

side, but had sympathised with and helped one another in addition.

It is over twenty years since Mrs Stevenson implanted these ideas in my mind, and at first, although they struck me as heroic and remarkable, they also struck me as rather anti-moral. Yet I soon came to see that far from being so, they were, on the contrary, based on the highest morality—unselfishness carried to its logical conclusion. After all, conjugal jealousy, as Bernard Shaw has pointed out, is largely a convention, and therefore its ignobility and sordidness are overlooked, just as what actually takes place in the majority of marriages is overlooked. " Suppose," Mrs Stevenson explained, " that two people manage to remain in love for one whole year, after that their love changes—it either becomes indifference, or a delightful comradeship such as I had with my husband. But to think of jealousy in such a relationship seems ridiculous. One might as well be jealous when one's friends fall in love."

" Some people are," I observed.

" Yes, but what sort ? Only very primitive persons. Could *you* be ? "

" Well, no—I couldn't."

" I used rather to enjoy my husband's affairs," she said, reminiscently ; " they gave me something to sympathise with him about ; they seemed to make us even better friends—if that had been possible. . . . When I look back to the happiness of *our* marriage, and then think how some people behave with their lawsuits and their pistols, it seems too absurd for words."

Some years later when I read Edward Carpenter's *Drama of Life and Death*, I was to see Mrs Stevenson's ideas echoed by him in the significant reflection : " Only when husband and wife can freely confide to each other their *affaires du cœurs* is unity between them assured."

But Mrs Stevenson's wisdom did not end here : she pointed out that a romantic passion was no basis

for matrimony at all, and that while it was in full swing, no thought of matrimony should even be entertained. Two people in love were simply two people intoxicated, and they could no more look at life, and especially at each other, with a clear vision, than a drunken man could see clearly the things in the street. Still, human beings *were* human beings, and to expect them to refrain from love-making within reason, merely because marriage was neither a possibility nor an advisability, was quite preposterous. Certain conventional ideas were all very well in the abstract, but they did not work out in practice.

I am aware that some of the more enlightened people of this present generation hold much the same views as Mrs Stevenson, and that hence they will not seem so novel or revolutionary; but it was very different twenty years ago. Yet, astounding as they then appeared to me, I was not for a moment troubled by any suspicion that Mrs S. was eccentric or unbalanced. When I looked at this refined, slender, little widow—she must have been about forty-eight—with her flow of well-chosen words, and her ability to converse on any subject, I felt that she was not only free from hysteria in any form, but was unusually and absolutely sane.

If my stay at Ambleteuse was indirectly responsible for a change in my ethical outlook, it affected my musical outlook likewise. Professor York Powell, or the "Yorker," as he was nicknamed, had some friends in the neighbourhood who were almost fanatical worshippers of Claude Achille Debussy; and to these friends he introduced me, taking me to dine with them one evening at their villa. Of the French composer's music I had hitherto heard nothing, so that my surprise was considerable when, dinner over, they confronted me with the first page of *Pelleas*, and I saw before me that opening phrase: here was the very Pre-Raphaelite atmosphere I had dreamed of, and to a certain extent

already created in my own compositions. True, there was to me a flavour of something exotic, which I naturally did not feel in my own music, and which struck me more by its strangeness than by its absolute beauty—but that the Frenchman and I had been aiming at something astonishingly similar, was evident. Had we not even chosen the same mediævalism-loving author to inspire our musical creations with his literary ones?

But although *Pelleas* is more heavily tinged with what I call the Pre-Raphaelite element than any of Debussy's other works, I like it on the whole the least of all his compositions. The incessant repetition of two-bar phrases is manneristic and aggravating, and the opera, taken in its entirety, is monotonous and not to be endured to its conclusion. Such, at any rate, is my opinion now, and such was the opinion I formed when I first heard the work at the Opéra Comique a year or more after I had read the vocal score that evening in Ambleteuse.

My stay in Ambleteuse had proved not only rich in experiences, but I had made a number of new friends, among whom were a Dr William Soper of Clapham Road, and his wife and daughter. This venerable surgeon who, with his long, white beard and skull-cap, looked like a baptist minister, took—as he said—a fancy to me because I reminded him of one of his sons who had recently died. Both Dr Soper and his wife have passed away, but for many years he took a very kindly interest in my welfare and showed much solicitude for my health, which seemed to give him cause for anxiety. He was, in fact, at one time under the impression that I was going into a decline, though I am still alive to prove him wrong.

Dr Soper was a distinct personality, and would often unwittingly cause me a good deal of amusement by his imposing manner and his capacity for feeling righteous indignation. While I was dining there one

evening he was called out to attend a drunken man who had fallen down and cut himself severely. "Miserable creature," Dr Soper exclaimed on his return, "I bound up his wounds, with much difficulty, considering his condition, and then when I admonished him to discontinue his bibulous habits, by way of thanks he merely commended me to Hell!"

Although one of the guests at the hotel at Ambleteuse would have liked to marry Dr Soper's attractive daughter, she chose otherwise, and a few years later married Dr Alec Densham of Worthing instead, who not only became my friend, but assisted in bringing my daughter into the world.

CHAPTER VII

KREISLER AND MY QUARTET

On my return to Liverpool I completed my Second Symphony and also improved a Pianoforte Quartet which I had begun the previous spring. The number of my large-dimensional works was now increasing; these included a Piano Trio, two Orchestral Suites—one "Heroic" and one "Idyllic,"—the *Magnificat*, the Overture to *Pelleas*, a Piano Concerto, a String Quartet (afterwards lost, as I mentioned before), and finally, two Symphonies. In addition, there were a number of small piano pieces and songs. But of all these works very few are now extant save for three movements of the Second Symphony, which Grainger insisted on arranging as three orchestral dances for two pianos; they are published by B. Schott's Söhne, Mainz.

How long I remained in Liverpool that autumn I cannot remember, but it could not have been more than two months before I received a letter from London—I forget from whom—pointing out that my presence there would be advisable. I accordingly set out for town, and after a very agreeable few days with Balfour Gardiner at his father's house in Tavistock Square, landed, on the strength of a very pressing invitation, at the Stevensons' address in Chiswick.

In those days St James's Hall was still in existence, and Mr Leslie proposed giving a chamber concert there under the auspices of Messrs Broadwood & Sons. For this purpose he wished to engage Kreisler, and thought it would be an excellent opportunity to

give my Piano Quartet a hearing. With this aim in view, we visited the celebrated violinist about ten o'clock one morning, so that I might play him the work on the piano and learn if he would consent to perform it. That he and his wife were still in bed when we arrived was evident ; for, after keeping us waiting some time, they both appeared attired in their dressing-gowns and looking as if they were not accustomed to being roused from their slumbers at such an " unearthly " hour. I found Kreisler modest, charming, and sympathetic ; he listened with interest to my quartet and appeared enthusiastic at the end. His wife also liked it—which, Mr Leslie said, was important—and as there were no business obstacles in the way, the engagement was clinched on the spot and the concert arranged for a few weeks later.

Looking back over many years, it seems strange to me that considering all I owe Kreisler, I have only spoken with him twice since that interview. He has played my works repeatedly, and expressed to mutual friends his admiration for them in very generous terms, yet circumstances have been such that we have never come really to know one another. When I hear of Kreisler in connection with my own music, it is either through the newspapers or through my publishers. To my astonishment I learned one day that he had set my piano piece " Lotusland " for violin, and that he had played it on an extensive tour in China and Japan. In the *Sunday Times* appeared the following paragraph :

" I " [Kreisler] " shall never forget the sight of the astonishing audience in their extraordinarily rich and picturesque costumes. And what was more remarkable still was the fact that they seemed positively to enjoy the music—to the extent of demanding one piece three times over !

" That piece was Cyril Scott's ' Lotusland '—which I thought was a very striking tribute to the Eastern

colouring of that charming piece. My own 'Tambourin Chinois' found favour too, for the same reason, I suppose, but nothing compared to that of Cyril Scott's music."

This news is especially significant seeing the letters I have received from Orientals, some of which I have included in the chapter headed "My Literary Museum." That I should particularly appeal to Eastern taste is curious, because I have never been to the East, nor have I heard much Eastern music. I can, therefore, only account for the fact by my extensive study of Oriental philosophy—a matter to which I shall allude later on.

But to return to the time when I was awaiting the performance of my quartet.

From one point of view I should have utilised those few weeks to further my musical career, but I possessed an innate distaste for what seemed to me no less than the avocation of commercial traveller. To go from one conductor to another and exhibit my musical wares was a proceeding too blatantly egotistical to be endured. True, I was an egotist in those days, but my egotism was not of that particular kind; and I almost think if I had not had the well-meant driving-force of both Mr Lüthy and Mrs Grainger at the back of me, I should have been content to sit, like Bonnier, at home and wait for events without making any effort to bring them about. Yes, undoubtedly, since my association with this peaceful professor, I had lost much of my ambition; but, unfortunately, for my convenience if not for my career, my friends had not lost it *for* me, and these latter included Percy Grainger as well as his mother.

"We *must* hear that *Magnificat*," he would say, "and if you don't go and stir up some of those stick-waving jossers—I shall!" And he *did*, though more indirectly by playing my piano pieces whenever he got the chance, than by bearding those lions in their

dens. Still, he never succeeded in placing the *Magnificat*, and by the time I might have had it performed I had ceased to desire that it *should* be.

While I was still waiting for the date of the Kreisler concert, I did, however, occasionally allow myself to be torn away from the charms of the Stevensons' household and be taken by Mr Leslie to visit one or two music-loving people. Among these were Sir Edgar and Lady Speyer at their house in Grosvenor Street, where one evening we dined, and also, if I remember rightly, Lady Radnor. But I cannot pretend that I was exactly at my ease during these visits—I felt rather like a person soliciting alms, or at least asking for a "job." And I was not so very far wrong, for Mr Leslie, in his kindness, *had* taken me to these people in the hopes that they might be induced to feel an interest in my music and, consequently, in myself. But to indulge in no self-delusion, my music was in those days little worthy of inspiring much interest, and so I feel no surprise that nothing very appreciable came of those visits, unless it be that perhaps they sowed the seeds for what happened some ten years later when Lady Speyer magnificently took the lead in a performance of my very difficult Pianoforte Quintet at the Wigmore Hall. I have, moreover, not forgotten that Sir Edgar, from motives of pure interest, used to furnish the money for extra rehearsals, so that British and other new works, including some of my own, might be performed by the Queen's Hall orchestra. Indeed, I consider it most regrettable that Sir Edgar and Lady Speyer have taken up their residence in America, and thus have been lost to the world of British music.

After the performance of my Piano Quartet at St James's Hall—the success of which, I feel sure, was far more due to Kreisler's exquisite playing than to its own merits—I received a letter from Messrs Enoch & Sons asking me to show them some of my

songs. Also, through the efforts of Mr Leslie, I got into touch with the head of Messrs Boosey of Regent Street, who agreed to publish the Quartet in question, though it was Mr Leslie who very generously paid half the expense of printing. From my interview with Messrs Enoch no result accrued; but Mr Arthur Boosey, on the other hand, decided he would accept some of my songs and pieces, and see if any sale could be found for them, the stipulation being that for the space of a year I should give him the first refusal of anything I wrote.

I should mention that after the performance of my Quartet, Sir Charles Villiers Stanford approached me and asked me to call on him the following morning, as he had something he wished to say. But although I took advantage of his kindness, the interview, owing to our temperamental differences, not to mention the divergence of our musical outlook, was hardly a success.

"It is all very fine," I remember him saying, "but one must have breathing space"—he alluded to my ideas on continual musical flow.

To which I answered: "But Bach flows on without a break."

"Ah, Bach is Bach," he said.

Whether this interview was in any way responsible for his giving credence to the absurd rumour that I wished to start an anti-Beethoven league, I cannot say, but I understand that on hearing that rumour he was justifiably scandalised and regarded me, musically speaking, as a lost soul; and when a year or two later Frederic Austin sang my "Waiting" and "A Picnic" with words from the Chinese, he went up to him and exclaimed: "Those songs are simply blasphemous!"

And yet, why not? Everybody has a right to the opinion which is the outcome of his own temperament, and to Sir Charles in those days when "discord," as we understand it now, was scarcely known, my

songs *would* sound blasphemous. My only regret is that they do not sound so any longer—I mean to persons much younger than Sir Charles.

It was just about this time that I had made the acquaintance of Mr Robin Legge, now the critic of the *Daily Telegraph*, but in those days reader, among his other activities, for Messrs Forsyth Bros. I owe this valuable friendship to Marriott-Watson, of whom I shall write shortly. Mr Legge had induced his firm, before I made my arrangements with Mr Boosey, to accept my album of " Six Little Pieces " also " Three Frivolous Pieces," which I had composed as far back as the Frankfurt days. I had also made another acquaintance in the publishing world, Mr A. J. Jaeger, for some time head of the printing department in the firm of Messrs Novello. But although he tried to persuade the readers of that long-established firm to interest themselves in my work, he did so without success. " Mr ——" I have forgotten his name— " considers your compositions too licentious," he told me when explaining the fruitlessness of his efforts. " Still," he went on, " *I* believe in you, and intend to publish that English Waltz of yours at my own expense —it will, of course, appear as a Novello publication, but the copyright will be mine."[1]

Mr Jaeger carried his project through, and the only *bravura* piece I have ever written appeared in print much about the same time as the pieces alluded to above. I may mention *en passant* that Percy Grainger played it on a concert tour he made with Adelina Patti, and owing to this, I not only one day met that septuagenarian singer, but heard her sing " Home, sweet home." Not that I was greatly impressed by this : what *did* impress me more than anything else about her was the extraordinary violet tint of her cheeks.

[1] Many years later Messrs Elkin & Co. bought the copyright from Mr Jaeger's widow.

But apart from such musical acquaintances as I made through Mr Leslie, I was to meet two very intimate friends of Mrs Stevenson's—these were Mr H. B. Marriott-Watson, the novelist, and Rosamund Marriott-Watson, the poetess. It appears that although Mrs Stevenson had been anxious to effect a meeting between us for some time, they had utterly refused. They both loved Louisa, as they called her, and resented her interest in myself. She had aroused their jealousy by her lack of reticence when talking to them about her " new friend," with the result that they came to dislike me, at any rate in theory, and to be annoyed with Mrs Stevenson for " putting it on so thick." But in order to convince themselves, and perhaps *her* too, that her affections were misplaced, they at last agreed to meet me, and thus one evening they arrived after dinner. Curiously enough the outcome was just the opposite from what they had anticipated: far from regarding me with hostility, henceforward they could not show me enough kindness. Mrs Stevenson was triumphant; and proceeded in private to disclose to me the many eccentricities, as also the history of this strange but engaging couple. Although they called themselves " Mr and Mrs," she told me that they were not married, but I have an idea they remedied this omission later on; Rosamund had been the wife of another man, from whom she was either separated or divorced. When she met Marriott she " got mad about him," to use Mrs Stevenson's words, and practically induced him to live with her. At first the *ménage* which included a son, was not a success, and Mrs Stevenson had constantly to slip round to their house in the capacity of peacemaker; but later on a very real and beautiful love came to exist between them, and when Rosamund died, Marriott not only refused to attend her funeral, but even to visit her grave: in *his* mind death and his wife should never be associated.

When young, Mrs Marriott-Watson had been tall, slender, and beautiful, but as she increased in years she increased in size, and when I met her for the first time she was enormous. But though she herself deplored this, it was not grotesque : it was imposing, and as it was associated with an extreme refinement of voice and manner, the general effect was queen-like in its impressiveness. Her stoutness was not due to gluttonous habits, but to a complaint known to obstetricians, though I believe it may have been aggravated by too frequently resorting to stimulants when ideas did not flow as they should. For Mrs Marriott-Watson certainly had ideas, and if her poetry is unequal, it is nevertheless full of charm and music. How melodious are the lines :

> " I dreamed the peach-trees blossomed once again,
> I dreamed the birds were calling in the dew."

And there are many others as beautiful, which only make one regret the more that Rosamund often permitted herself to drift into poetic platitudes in order to reap a few guineas from the editors of magazines.

As a raconteur Mrs Watson was not easily surpassed ; she had known so many interesting people, and was not afraid in her own refined way of calling spades by their proper name, neither was she restricted in her views by any particular form of religious belief. I remember how she used to regale me with innumerable stories in her garden at Shere, that charming Surrey village, where she spent the latter part of her life, and to which she introduced me by inviting me down for a week-end soon after our friendship began. It was she who told me the so typical story of Henry James's encounter with a gushing society lady who had said : " Well—well—dear Mr Henry James—and what is *your* opinion of life ? " And he had answered with his characteristic slowness and pomposity of speech : " Life, Madam—if—ah—so I may call you—is—ah—the

predicament which precedes death." And I feel sure the story was no fabrication; for years after, when I met him at the house of Mrs Charles Hunter, I realised that only he could have invented such a magnificent truism. Rosamund also related how she had once asked Henry James to explain his *modus operandi*; and how, after some deliberation, he had cryptically said: "Well, it's something like a dog—one returns to one's vomit." Yet this was enlightening compared with what happened on another occasion when she asked him to tell her what he really did mean by his book *The Sacred Fount*—he talked for half an hour, and at the end she was more mystified than at the beginning. Very significant, seeing that Mrs Stevenson had previously told me the plot was so obscene that all explanations were out of the question. . . .[1]

Marriott was a raconteur too, but of a very different kind; and curiously enough I cannot remember a single story he told me. When I first met him, he talked incessantly, but he was somewhat helped that evening by the contents of Mrs Stevenson's whiskey decanter, which he broke before going home. He was a largely-built man even then, but in later years he became more enormous than his wife. Except for his smile, which was unusually kind, he suggested to me an Italian brigand, with his flowing moustache and profusion of dark, curly hair. He had, when in repose, a rather fierce type of face, but it belied his nature which was essentially friendly. If his life had been differently regulated, he might have become a great artist; as it was, circumstances forced him to write for money. His health also troubled him, for he suffered from claustrophobia, and could never travel

[1] Mrs Stevenson also told me that Robert Louis' admiration for Henry James had been so great, that he would break up a general conversation with: "Hush, hush, all of you—Henry James is speaking."

by train or sit in a small room. Altogether he was a pronouncedly nervous subject, and would fidget and sniff, or what was worse, suck his teeth—a habit which exasperated his wife, especially when there was music, which was one of her absorbing interests.

If Marriott had the one weakness, a predilection for stimulants, it was outbalanced many times by his unusual virtues. He was the staunchest of friends; and if he once liked people, liked them for always, in spite of anything they might do. Nothing was too much trouble where his friends were concerned. It was through him that I met Robin Legge, as already mentioned; also Mr H. G. Wells, Mr Laurence Housman, and many other men in the world of art and letters. Being a member of the Savile Club, he often invited me there for lunch, and afterwards we would sit in the billiard-room with William Nicholson, Legge, and others, chatting over our coffee and cigarettes; after which we would get on a bus together and go back to Chiswick, where he would sometimes escort me as far as Mrs Stevenson's door.

In spite of the pronounced sympathy between us, circumstances, over which I had no control, decreed that after that prolonged visit I should only see Mrs Stevenson once again—at Shere, many years after, when she spent a night with the Marriott-Watsons.

The illness which culminated in the death of this noble-hearted woman was very terrible, but she endured it with characteristic patience and fortitude. I owe her indeed much: through her own example she banished the childish attribute of jealousy from my nature, and for this she has my eternal gratitude.

It was to her memory that I inscribed a poem in my volume *The Voice of the Ancient* (J. M. Watkins, London), which causes its readers either to feel shocked or to smile with incredulity at what they consider such an unrealisable ideal. But is it unrealisable? If one person can realise it, so can others. It were

perhaps not without interest to quote this poem, for when Dr Eaglefield Hull did me the honour of writing a book on my work, and I pointed out to him that he had omitted one of my most significant poems, he replied that he could not endorse the views set forth therein, so did not wish to include it. As it is I myself who am writing *this* book, the objection does not apply, so I reprint it here, to be torn or not, as the case may be, by the " mangling tooth " of criticism.

You gave me the best of your heart—when you told me that you love him,
When through your smiling tears you breathed your joy ;
Your trust had told you, never thoughts of mine could e'er reprove him,
I knew your love for him our oneness never could destroy.

Your soul was so near to mine—when, your head upon my shoulder,
You breathed to me that you had given him all,
And then I knew so sure how frail, how infinitely colder
Were all the sweets of passion's rapture—by *this* love how small.

I joyed for your gladness, dear ! I rejoiced your fragrant flowers
Should bathe *another* in their gentle balms :
How foolish had I thought to anchor fast this love of ours,
Which through so many storms had sought at last the golden calms.

I've tasted the fruits of your lips—yea, so often, but their essence
Has never thrilled me as your soul's to-day,
Your lips' sweet fruitage dims before its holy efflorescence
Which shall enveil me still, though death have filched my frame away.

Ah, never could I be sad—when another joy-bound vessel
Upon your life's horizon shall appear,
And if your hands in *another's* hands a little close shall nestle,
Am I not glad to have another joy of yours to bear ?

Since unto *my* breast you come—yea, when breeze or breath
or shimmer
Within the May-land of your spirit sighs,
Could soul to soul be sweeter and could trust more brightly
glimmer
As beacon on the paling skyline of our destinies ?

You've given me all, my wife ! Thus no spirit could be nearer ;
Conjoined in wedlock, yet eternally free—
Nay, just your love for him has made you still a little dearer,
By bringing one more flower to us of joy and sympathy.

CHAPTER VIII

RICHTER AND MY "HEROIC SUITE"

THROUGH the joint exertions of Mrs Fletcher and Mr Lüthy, the promise of an interview with Dr Hans Richter had at last been obtained. He had proved a very elusive gentleman, and it had been difficult to pin him down, but after much manœuvring on the part of a Mr Ettling, who might almost be described as Richter's ancient, it was finally arranged that I should go out to Bowden and present myself at Richter's house.

From the meteorological impressions which still linger in my mind, I should say the time of the year was either February or March, for I remember that after I had waited a considerable while and in much nervous discomfort, Richter at last put his head in at the door and grunted something to the effect that he was wet through and must change his clothes; and at that same moment a very golden and watery sun broke through a mass of clouds which had just ceased discharging a heavy shower of rain: Richter had obviously been caught while taking a country ramble.

When after five minutes he re-appeared, he was dressed in a Jaeger outfit which suggested a cross between a dinner suit and pyjamas; and having, it would seem, donned it very hastily, he had omitted to fasten one single button of his trousers. The photographs of this short, fat, bald, bearded, apoplectic and bespectacled conductor are so well known to music lovers, that no lengthy description of him is necessary; they even convey to those gifted with the

least insight, his general grumpiness and his love of good eating, good drinking, and good company. At the time when I first met him, he was around his sixtieth year and looked his age to the full.

I had brought my "Heroic Suite" to show him, and after opening the piano he seated himself by my side and, with a grunt, requested me to proceed. The first movement, a prelude, was short and intended to be majestic in character, though my ideas of "majesty" have altered since then. Richter listened with attention, and after it was over, admitted somewhat grudgingly in German that "Yes—yes—it was quite musician-like. . . ." This was not very encouraging, and I began to feel as if things were not going as well as they might. Some forty miles distant I remembered that Mr Lüthy was anxiously waiting to hear the result of this momentous interview. Yet I continued, despite misgivings, and to my relief, a change came over the doctor's face and manner: he began to grow enthusiastic, and his enthusiasm became greater the longer I played. "Most original!" he exclaimed; "excellent—finely orchestrated—ho-ho, splendid harmonies. . . ." Then at the end he said: "I make you my compliment. I am glad to have found a *new* great work. I shall certainly perform it."

But was it a great work? In my opinion, no: it was just new enough to please an eminent conductor who had been brought up on Wagner and Beethoven, but it was not new enough to merit the epithet "great." Maybe it possessed a certain element of originality considering the epoch in which it was written, but that is not sufficient, and even in my relief I realised this. I was in one sense elated, and in another sense depressed. I wanted Richter to perform the work, but should have preferred him to say: "Yes, I will give this Suite a hearing, but to be quite candid, it goes too far for *me*." A year or two hence, by the way, he did utter the latter part of this sentence in connection with a Rhapsody

I had written; and he had the great modesty to add that he was far too old to follow any longer such modern stuff. But even *that* work I have destroyed, and am thankful it was never performed.

After this visit to Bowden, Richter and I became quite good friends, and he occasionally invited me to tea or lunch, when he would grow communicative and entertain me with his views. He apparently had his knife into unsuspecting Sir Henry Wood, of whom he said: "To think that he should go and give Beethoven's Ninth Symphony—the most beautiful thing that exists in the whole of music—and give it while people take walks. . . ."[1] But if Richter had only been to a Queen's Hall promenade concert and seen that immovable mass of listening mankind, he might have thought differently; as it was, he seemed rather glad of some excuse to exercise what every German knows by the name of *Deutsche Wut*.[2]

One day he told me a story of how he and his orchestra had gone over to Ireland, though to which town I have forgotten. When they arrived at the concert-hall for rehearsal, to his utter dismay there was not a single chair for the players to sit upon; and as it is, of course, quite impossible to play certain instruments in a standing posture, something drastic had to be done. Luckily one of the instrumentalists had a friend in the upholstery trade, so he telephoned to him to send across anything in the way of seats he could possibly collect. After some delay there arrived on the scene armchairs of all shapes and sizes, sofas, chesterfields, benches, settees, and even commodes, and the orchestra proceeded to rehearse, presenting, needless to say, a most peculiar spectacle. But what had been the cause of this disastrous omission? "That I will tell you," said Richter, emphasising his confidentiality on my ribs. It appears that by some mistake the original

[1] "*Während die Leute spazieren gehen.*"

[2] German rage.

order had been given to two firms instead of only to one, and that the vans of those two firms chanced to arrive simultaneously at the hall. The result was unfortunate; first there was an argument, and then a pugilistic display, which proved so absorbing to the two rival vanmen that both of them drove away without unloading one single chair. "Very droll," concluded Richter, amplifying his afternoon tea with a liberal helping of sardines.

The performance of my "Heroic Suite" in Manchester, to which Balfour Gardiner and other friends came, was not a genuine success: the applause was half-hearted, and the criticisms on the whole were unfavourable; though I was not disturbed by this, on the contrary, rather pleased. Nevertheless Richter decided to give the work another hearing, in Liverpool—and this time the applause was considerable, especially when he called me out and shook hands with me on the platform. Yet in spite of this, or perhaps because of it, one of the critics wrote that the work as it stood was not worth the serious attention of either the concert-promoters, the orchestra, *or* the conductor. Indeed, thinking I should be upset by such terrible condemnation, Dr Reynolds, a well-known organist and teacher living in Birkenhead, came all the way over to Liverpool to console me, and to protest against such an injustice and what he considered such flagrant audacity. If a world-renowned artist like Dr Richter considered the work good, that was enough, he assured me, and I oughtn't to think any more about it. He must have thought me very conceited when I confessed that I was *not* thinking about it—at any rate in *that* sense.

Somewhere around that date Mr Paderewski came to play in Liverpool, and as he was a friend of Mrs Fletcher, she asked me to her house after his concert in order to meet him and introduce him, somehow or other, to my Piano Concerto. That I should have

found him fascinating goes almost without saying, but I found him even more so when he put his hand on my shoulder, and after scrutinising me for a moment said: "There is something in your face which impresses me—I should like to see that Piano Concerto Mrs Fletcher speaks about."

Paderewski spent most of that evening playing billiards and smoking Russian cigarettes, and when it was time to go home he gave me a lift in his four-wheeler. As we rolled along I said to him: "You are the first great pianist I ever heard—I was only ten at the time, but you made such an impression on me, that from that moment I decided to become a musician."

He leant forward and pressed my hand. "May I bring you luck," he said, "and the Concerto—send it down to my hotel to-morrow morning."

Yet he never played it, and I am glad he did *not*—for it was a bad work. Later it became *An Evening Hymn* (Boosey & Co.), a curious metamorphosis indeed; but I had only kept one melody out of it, the rest I destroyed.

I had done very little in the way of playing at concerts, but occasional engagements turned up for me, one of which I particularly happen to remember. It was in Birkenhead, and among the artists engaged were Madame Albani and Miss Muriel Foster. I had seen neither of these two vocalists before, and although the name of Madame Albani was familiar to me, had never given a thought to her appearance or her age: an omission which proved unfortunate. On entering the artists' room and seeing before me a young, dark, and very beautiful woman, I bowed and said: "Madame Albani, I presume?"

Miss Foster was taken aback. "Ssh . . ." she whispered, glancing nervously in the direction of the prima donna who was swallowing raw eggs, "*That* is Madame Albani over there."

But I think my *faux pas* was not quite so bad as one perpetrated by Joseph Holbrooke at a meeting where another eminent singer was "saying a few words"; when during a pause he remarked: "I quite agree with what this lady—*I don't know her name*—has just said." There was a roar of laughter in which the singer—it was Blanche Marchesi—very good-naturedly joined. One has to remember, however, that Holbrooke is short-sighted, so there *were* mitigating circumstances.

I have forgotten on what sort of work I was engaged during that particular spring in Liverpool, nor is it of much interest; in any case whatever I did was done with difficulty, for my health was troubling me a good deal. Not only had I to put up with constant headaches associated with drowiness, but I suffered from fits of unbearable depression during which I imagined myself in love with this, that, or the other girl. One is supposed to love with one's heart, but it seems to me I loved with my liver, even though that organ was not responsible for my headaches, as time has proved. It is true that an occasional change to Helsby, where Mrs Fletcher had a most hospitable cottage, or a visit to some cousins in Southport, did me a certain amount of good, but the effect was not permanent, and even as I write now, twenty years after, I am sensible of that pain at the back of my eyes, and know that in a short while I shall have to lie down and seek relief in an hour's sleep.

And yet—who knows? Those headaches may be responsible for my being alive at all: if I had been a fit man, the missiles of the war might have long since blasted me to another plane, and the haters of my comparatively mild discords been rid of me for ever. But that is merely by the way. . . .

When the late spring of that year approached, I made another journey to London and stayed with various acquaintances, among whom was Mrs Frank

Lowry, a friend of Grainger's. She then resided in Queen's House, Cheyne Walk, where Whistler or Carlyle or *some* eminent man had lived. Mrs Lowry, a tall, statuesque woman of about fifty, had become a fervent admirer of the golden-haired composer, and had collected a number of people to sing certain choruses of his which he had recently composed. Among these were such devotees as Quilter, Balfour Gardiner, Herman Sandby, the cellist, and Gervase Elwes, then hardly known as a singer, but afterwards to become so famous.

And those chorus rehearsals were amusing entertainments, for we composers, strangely enough, found part-singing surprisingly difficult. I remember Gardiner saying, with that ultra-refined Oxonian intonation of his: "The only way I can possibly sing my part is by closing my ears, so that I can't hear what you others are singing. As soon as I hear *you*, I inadvertently begin to sing *your* parts." And there was Gardiner singing at the top of his voice with his hands clapped over his ears, as if every moment he expected the loud report of a gun. Moreover, to add to the strangeness of the spectacle, Percy Grainger was to be seen conducting, not with a bâton, but with his fists—a little habit he has when enthusiastic.

I must gratefully mention that Mrs Lowry exerted herself not only for Percy's advancement, but also for mine. She would take me to dine with Lady *This* and Lord *That*, and in fact introduce me to any "useful" people (how I dislike that term) she happened to know. One night she took me to a little house near by, where on the drawing-room table I saw a signed photograph of King Edward. "Ah, yes," she said, "very often a little brougham drives up to this door, and out steps the King." When our hostess appeared, she proved to be the beautiful Mrs George Batten. Later on I came to know her daughter and son-in-law, Mr and Mrs now Sir Austin and Lady Harris,

at whose house in the country I spent many hilarious weeks in company with Hugo Rumboldt.

I forget to whom I was indebted for an introduction to Mr Fuller-Maitland, at that time critic of the *Times*, but he received me one day at his house, and ran his eye over some of my orchestral scores—in one of which he chanced to discover an Italian word mis-spelt.

"I am most *anxious* you should learn Italian," he lisped, as he closed the book.

I politely thanked him for his anxiety, and shortly afterwards took my departure.

It was Mr Fuller-Maitland who, at the end of an evening of Debussy and Ravel, would murmur: "I am now going home, and will play the common chord of C several times before retiring to bed."

Miss Evelyn Suart, the pianist, was not a frequenter of the Lowry salon, but it was nevertheless at this period that I made her acquaintance one afternoon at Mrs Grainger's. Our meeting could not accurately be described as a success, since she took a dislike to me, and I was not endowed with sufficient thickness of skin to fail to notice this; but luckily for me her dislike proved merely a temporary one, and to our later friendship I owe two very important factors in my life—my twenty years unclouded association with the firm of Messrs Elkin & Co., and my equally long interest in metaphysics. How I came to visit Miss Suart in her flat, seeing I was in those days troubled by a childish attribute called pride and refused to bother with people who disliked me, is something I cannot explain; but I *did* call on her, and managed to create a better impression than at Mrs Grainger's, with the result that I was asked to call again, and after that second call was invited to stay with Mrs and Miss Suart whenever I came to town. The truth was that Miss Suart, whether rightly or wrongly, had come to believe in me as a composer, and showed her belief in a practical way by playing my few piano pieces

whenever opportunity offered. She was a brilliant exponent of the Leschetizky method, and had been for some years with the celebrated teacher in Vienna.

So far I have not alluded to my much cherished friends H. D. Harben and his wife, with whom that year I spent most of the remainder of the early summer; but as our friendship dates from as far back as the Frankfurt days, and my chapter relating to that period is already overcrowded, I have not found it possible to mention all my characters in the order in which they appear. For my meeting with H. D. Harben, so well known in the socialist world, I have primarily to thank Mrs John Bostock, and secondly her niece, Miss Agnes Bostock, who afterwards became Mrs H. D. Of Mrs Bostock's memory—she has been dead a few years—I can but write with gratitude, for she be-mothered me much when I was a grass-orphan, and had no family of young people to go to for recreation. As it was, I knew that I should always find a welcome at Mrs Bostock's flat. I must have struck her as a very peculiar youth judging from what she afterwards told me anent my first visit, when it seems I spent most of my time walking up and down the room with bowed head, whistling *sotto voce*—that is, improvising partly in my head and partly out loud. This perambulating habit I certainly *did* possess, since I remember it used to provoke the remark from my cousin in Southport: "Now then, young man, don't you go wearing out my carpet with your great hoofs like that!" But I was at least *staying* with my cousin: that I should have so far forgotten myself as to behave thus at an afternoon call seems to justify my mother's very frequent remonstrance: "Really, Cyril, people will wonder where on earth you've been brought up!"

Mrs Bostock nevertheless forgave me my disconcerting habits, and would even sit late into the night arguing religion—she *for* and I *against* personal survival, though we never made any headway, for all

the arguments ended in the same fashion. She would say: "Well, when we're both in the next world, you'll see I was right." And I would say: "But you'll *never* know if I am right, because there'll be nobody to convince you, and nobody to be convinced." And at that we would leave it—until the next time.

Yet she was very tolerant, though perhaps rather nervous that I might put foolish ideas into her daughters' heads, and especially into the head of her tall and attractive niece—she and I having been good friends almost from the first. She was, moreover, engaged to H. D. Harben even then, and he might not have been pleased to find his fiancée agnostically inclined. Strange to say, when he and I did meet for the first time in Frankfurt, and mutually disliked each other, it was an argument over religion which brought us together, and inspired that friendship which has lasted ever since. He had considered me one of these brainless young musicians, and I had considered him an equally brainless sentimentalist; and only when we came to argue did we find ourselves both mistaken. I found him, if a believer, at least an unorthodox one; he found me, if a disbeliever, at least an intelligent one.

The particular summer of which I write, H. D. Harben and his wife were living a few miles from Worcester, where he was nursing a constituency. From his garden there was a view of the Malvern Hills, and altogether the atmosphere and surroundings were unusually inspiring; especially do I remember a buttercup field with a stream and a row of willow-trees. We had all our meals out of doors, and I spent most of my time writing poetry, much encouraged by H. D., who had written many verses himself. He was a keen musical enthusiast and delighted me by going off into peals of laughter at the strangeness of my latest "discord." It was not derisive laughter, but aroused by sheer amusement at what seemed my extraordinary daring. And not only did he wax

enthusiastic over music, but over everything and everybody; even his voice seemed enthusiastic, and when he was in good spirits might be heard through the entire house, as might also his snatches of song or whistling, and his loud footsteps as he ran—not walked—from one room to the other.

But with all his cheerfulness there were times when he became so *distrait* that he did the most ridiculous things. One wet day he got into the tube and went a few stations till he arrived at Oxford Circus, where he alighted; no sooner had he done so than, with the memory of the downpour still in his subconsciousness, he put up his umbrella and walked along yards of underground passage till he was obliged to lower it again in order to get into the lift. "And didn't you laugh?" I asked him after he had told me this story. "No," he said, "I left that to the others. I felt distinctly sheepish myself."

All the same if I have got this story against him, he and his wife have got many against me, and ones which do not show me in a lovable light.

Mrs H. D. said to me one day: "Cyril, if I invite some ladies to tea, you *will* be a dear and play to them a bit, won't you?"

And I agreed; but when the ladies arrived I made some excuse and said I didn't feel in the mood; nor did any amount of persuasion have the least effect—I would *not* play.

As might be expected, after the visitors had departed Mrs H. D. took me to task. "You put me in a most awkward position," she said, "after my promising them that you would play, I really think you might have done so: why wouldn't you?" "But my dear Agnes," I declared, "they were all so ugly. . . ." The story may be uncharitable, but it is strange how very much more obliging one feels when there is a pretty girl in the room; even gruff old Brahms was transformed in such circumstances!

One summer H. D. took me to stay with his grandfather, old Sir Henry Harben, at his house near Horsham. Sir Henry had founded the Prudential Insurance Company, had been at one time Mayor of Hampstead, and had distinguished himself in various other ways. I found him a very pietistic old gentleman, who combined religion and cricket-matches during what one might term his cricketing week-ends. Possessing a private ground, he used to invite teams to stay over Sundays, but each member of the eleven had to attend prayers morning and evening, and church twice on the Sabbath; to refuse was to incur Sir Henry's righteous but most violent displeasure. In fact, he was so rigid a disciplinarian, that he would treat his own son, aged sixty, as if he were a little boy. Yet though a martinet, his generosity was considerable, and many were the poor families who owed him much gratitude. We Londoners, by the way, may also be grateful to him; it is owing to his solicitude for our needs that in nearly every important Square in London we can descend a few paces underground and get a wash and brush up for the sum of threepence—not to mention what we can have for nothing. . . .

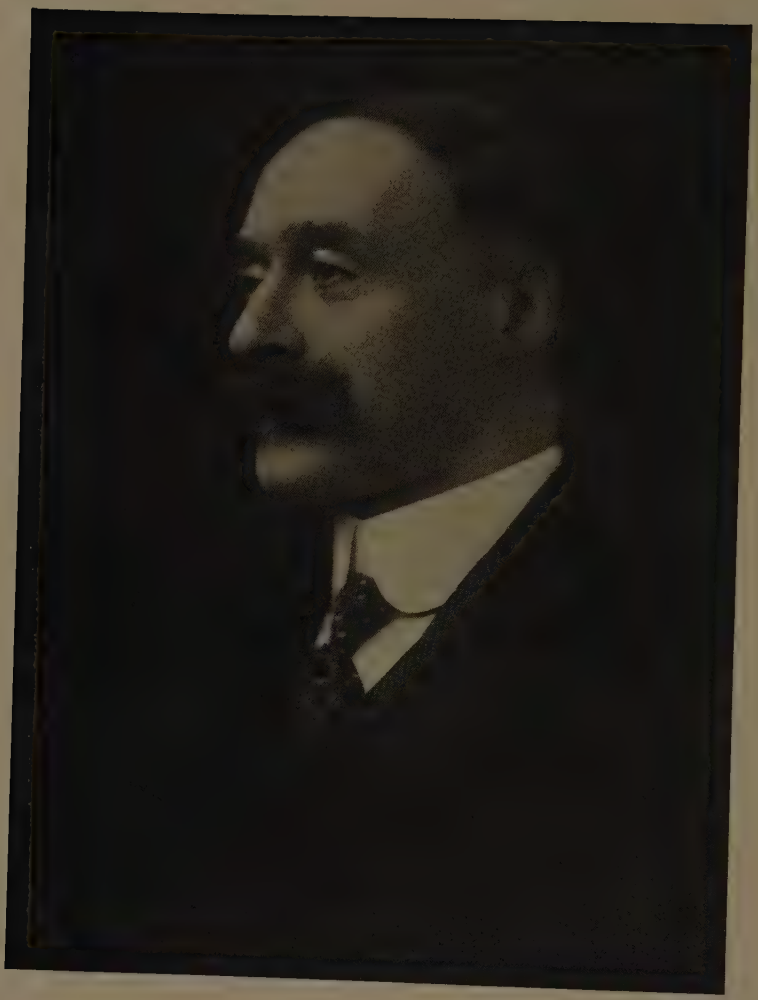
CHAPTER IX

FIRST GLIMPSE OF SPIRITUAL PHILOSOPHY

HAVING after the performance of the "Heroic Suite" composed a sextet for five strings and piano, and also two songs which I dedicated to Mrs Robin Legge, I set out again for London, where I stayed with Mrs and Miss Suart at their large flat in Bedford Court Mansions. The sextet was the most "modern" thing I had done so far, and no sooner did Miss Suart see it than she suggested giving a party in their music-room, and collecting five string players to perform it.

And this party, when it *did* take place, caused something of a sensation; in the passage groups of guests were to be seen in heated argument, denouncing the sextet as an outrage on musical intelligence, and so ear-splitting as to be unendurable. Was it, in fact, music at all, and were such young men as this Cyril Scott to be encouraged? All the same, the work was later on performed in Brussels, though it nearly came to be discarded during rehearsal, and only the timely intervention of no less a person than Georgette Leblanc (Madame Maeterlinck) saved it; she encouraged the six desperate performers to "stick to their guns!" But in spite of its mythical "modernity," I have not only made it more modern still, but transformed it from a sextet into a quintet; in that newer guise it has since been performed in London, Holland, and elsewhere.

It was just about the time of that tumultuous party that Mr Arthur Boosey came to the conclusion that my songs did not fulfil the commercial expectations he



MR. W. W. A. ELKIN

had entertained for them ; so he sent for me one day, and without any preamble said : " Mr Cyril Scott—there is no real contract between us, and although I daresay you are quite clever, your things don't sell—you must consider our arrangement at an end."

This was a bombshell indeed, for Messrs Boosey had paid me a sum on account of royalties which had enabled me to live quite comfortably, and I did not wish to have to throw myself again on the generosity of my father. Thus it was a rather dejected young man who entered Miss Suart's music-room shortly afterwards, to ask for sympathy and advice. And Miss Suart was far from lacking in initiative ; she cheered me as best she could, told me not to take my " dismissal " too much to heart, and said she would go straight round to her friend Mr Elkin—who had just started business on his own—and see what could be done.

The result of that interview was most satisfactory ; Miss Suart returned with the news that Mr Elkin would see me with a view to making a contract which he thought would be to our mutual advantage. I was, of course, intensely relieved and intensely grateful, and from that time onward Mr Elkin has not only been my publisher, but my very dear friend and adviser. Many have been the enjoyable evenings spent in his company and that of Mrs Elkin, so well known for her operatic translations. It is now nearly twenty years since our first meeting, and I have seen the son of the house, Mr Robert Elkin, grow up from an attractive boy in knickerbockers to a full-fledged member of the firm. Thus I have the felicity of counting the entire Elkin family among my nearest friends, and this is particularly fortunate, since for one of my temperament if business relations are to be comfortable, they must be associated with friendship.

It was in this way, then, that I came to leave the firm of Boosey, with the sad and pessimistic Mr

Arthur at its head, and to make a contract with Messrs Elkin & Co. But although Mr Boosey was of the opinion that my works were a meagre business proposition, he nevertheless refused to sell the copyright of those he had published : a matter of regret to Mr Elkin, seeing he would much have liked to include three songs in particular in his own catalogue. These songs, " A Last Word (*Ma Mie*)," " Villanelle," and " Asleep," are to my mind by far the best of my earliest vocal compositions.

Mr Arthur Boosey has since left this world, which he seemed to find so sad and troublesome, and I am sorry to think that I, with my delinquencies, should have unintentionally added to its troublesomeness. Yet, despite his apprehensions, I see by my royalty account that the firm is no longer out of pocket over me. My songs may not have been of that " immediately fascinating " type which Stephen Adams was so fortunate in producing—he informed an audience that he worked with such pride and care that it took him two years to compose the " Holy City "—but at any rate they have " made good " in the long run. Mr Boosey, however, had looked for more rapid results. " Yes," he said dolefully to one of my friends, " I did all I could for Mr Cyril Scott—I introduced him to my travellers. . . ." He also, on another occasion, when he was perhaps feeling in a different mood, remarked : " Mr Scott is quite a clever young fellow—we are doing pretty well out of his ' Pierrot Pieces. . . .' " It was, in fact, difficult to know exactly what Mr Boosey *did* think about my work.

If I owe my association with my present publisher to Miss Evelyn Suart, I owe her, though in rather a curious way, something else as well.

She was, and probably still is, a most ardent Christian Scientist ; indeed, Ernest Thesiger once said to me : " I called on Miss Suart the other day, and found her suffering from Christian Scientific influenza."

" And what may that be ? " I asked.

" Such a bad attack that one ought to be in bed—but isn't."

Now I detested any form of metaphysics, mysticism, spookiness, or whatever I called it in those days, and like many another vain person—for it *is* vanity—I was aggressively intolerant towards the whole subject. It had got on my nerves, and I could not refrain from arguing about it and denouncing it at every possible opportunity. This was, I grant, both ill-mannered and ridiculous, seeing that Miss Suart made no attempt to convert me to her beliefs, but I seemed unable to help myself. The crux of the matter was that, although I had uprooted jealousy in its grosser form, I still retained it in that subtler one which reveals itself in an intolerance towards those interests on the part of one's friends which one cannot share oneself ; added to this was that unreasoning fear of the unknown. I nevertheless made myself read Mrs Eddy's book, *Science and Health*, and although I disliked its Americanisms and its religiosity, I realised that its author had stumbled across some natural law which was certainly worth investigating. And in this aim I was assisted by a French-American singer friend of Miss Suart's, named René Papin ; for some reason I could discuss the subject with this man in a far calmer and more level-headed manner than with anyone else. Though a practising Christian Scientist—by this I do not mean a professional healer—he was sufficiently unorthodox to admire Prentice Mulford, Dr Hudson, Ralph Waldo Trine, and finally Mrs Besant, whom one evening he induced me to go and hear. The outcome was unexpected in every way. Having already classed her, together with all other " religionists," as a hysterical person, and consequently thinking to hear a rather emotional, fanatical, sectarian lecture, I heard on the contrary the most large-viewed, tolerant, and magnificent oration it were possible to imagine. To say I

was " converted " like a drunkard at a Salvation Army meeting would be incorrect, but I was greatly *impressed*, and said to my friend : " If Theosophy can produce *that*, all I can say is it's well worth looking into."

Hitherto my experience of religious people had not been of the happiest. They had one and all maintained *their* way to be the only correct way of thinking, and all others to be wrong. So that to me religion had spelt discord and quarrelling, the very opposite of that which it professed. Even relative to the denomination in which I was brought up, I used to hear discussions about the—shall we say *size* of various churchmen : one was too *low*, a second too *high*, a third too *broad*, and a fourth too *narrow* ; as to the exponents of other creeds, they were beyond the pale altogether, idolaters, heathens, barbarians, or any other insulting term by which they might be classified as utterly and hopelessly *wrong*. . . . And then before my astonished mental vision comes suddenly Theosophy, with, for me, an absolutely new point of view. The truth of religion, it maintains, is not like the truth that $2+2=4$; it is of a different nature altogether. As the sun is the same sun whether we look at it through white, red, blue, or yellow glass, through haze, cloud, or smoke, so also is Truth—God—the Self—or whatever one may choose to call it. What would we think if the man who was looking through the red glass quarrelled with the man who was looking through the blue, because to each the sun looked different ? We should think these two men were fools, and to put an end to their quarrelling would suggest that they exchanged glasses—which, were it really a question of their vision of *God*, they would unfortunately refuse to do. There is only one God, but manifold ways of thinking about Him, naming Him, worshipping Him, and contemplating Him. Yet devotees refuse to, or cannot, recognise this, and hence each pronounces the other to be wrong. If —to return to our simile—a man looks at God, as it

were, through a dirty glass, he sees Him with objectionable attributes ; with jealousy, revengefulness, meanness, and tyranny ; if he looks at Him through a clean glass, he sees Him as Perfect Love, with all its large-heartedness, tolerance, and charity.

This in effect was the message of Theosophy which I heard that Sunday evening at Queen's Hall—or rather, it was part of the message ; for it was further maintained that Man was immortal, but that no person was expected to accept this statement on trust : he could, if he so wished, verify it for himself. Though Theosophy advocated Faith, it advocated that type of faith which is based on *understanding* and hence on knowledge ; it even considered the attempt to believe in anything which went contrary to human reason as injurious to our minds ; and to uphold its contention it quoted the words of the New Testament : " To faith add virtue, and to virtue add *knowledge*." But how was that knowledge to be acquired ? By the ancient science of Yoga, of which at the time I knew nothing, yet very soon began to know through a book which was shortly to come into my hands.

When I returned to Miss Suart that evening and told her how greatly I had been impressed by the lecture, she was not enthusiastic over my change of attitude : for Mrs Eddy in *Science and Health* had denounced Theosophy, little realising that she was denouncing the very doctrines she herself preached, though in a different form. For whether, as in the Eastern books, we allude to the Self [1] and the not-Self, or as Mrs Eddy, to Divine Mind and Mortal Mind, we in reality mean much the same thing—the quarrel is merely based on terms. And because Mrs Eddy failed to recognise this, her message in my opinion is marred by the sectarian spirit which she seems to have been unable to exclude from her book.

[1] The Sanskrit word is Atman, for which there is no adequate English equivalent.

I of course realise now, however blind I was then, that I, too, in my so-called agnosticism, was as intolerant towards other people's view-points as the very religionists I had denounced. It was, perhaps, for this reason that Mrs Besant's contrasting broad-mindedness made such an immediate appeal. The man, for instance, who is never jealous, may not be greatly enthralled by a doctrine of non-jealousy—to him it is already obvious ; but the man who *is* jealous and hates the sensation, yet erroneously believes that love and jealousy are inseparable, may, if he be endowed with a little wisdom, be glad of a point of view which will rid him of that painful illusion. For my own part, as little as I once enjoyed being jealous, did I enjoy looking down on my neighbour for what I considered his ridiculous and hysterical views. Thus I was far from peaceful, and only when I acquired tolerance towards all beliefs, even towards vices and weaknesses, did I find that Peace, which, with always lessening intervals of withdrawal, I have retained ever since.

For this I have—if indirectly—to thank Miss Suart.

CHAPTER X

IMPRESSIONS OF DEBUSSY

It was in the winter of that year, if I remember rightly, that I decided to go to Paris. For one thing, Mrs Adela Maddison whom I had recently met, promised to introduce me to Gabriel Fauré, Debussy, Ravel, and other composers ; for another, Balfour Gardiner had made up his mind to spend a few weeks in the French capital, and as I was only too glad to have his companionship, we arranged to travel together and to stay at a little hotel in the Rue Beaujolais. This hotel was recommended by a friend of Gardiner's, the Canadian historian, Mr Biggar, who was living there at the time, and who generously made it his business for the first few days to pilot us on our expeditions to the various museums and galleries. But as I soon grew tired of sight-seeing, I hired a piano and tried to work ; though, apart from writing two piano pieces, since lost, and a couple of songs (one named " Sorrow ") to Dowson's lyrics, I accomplished very little. Paris did not prove as inspiring as I had hoped ; I did, however, succeed in meeting the composers already mentioned, and was first introduced to Gabriel Fauré, to whom, at Mrs Maddison's request, I played my Pierrot Pieces. Whether he liked them or not—for, as everybody knows, Frenchmen are proverbially polite —I could not tell at the time ; but Mrs Maddison, who knew him intimately, told me that he was much impressed, and that his " compliments " were sincere. All I have to say about those pieces myself is that Percy Grainger " inspired " them, and that if there be any merit in them, I owe it to him.

My next introduction was to Maurice Ravel, Mrs Maddison having invited him to tea at her flat one afternoon. In those days Ravèl was rather a strange apparition, and looked very much like a picture by John Leech. He affected a type of face decoration in the form of moustache and whiskers which I have never seen on any other person, and a tail-coat suit with a large and unusual pattern. These extravagances, however, were not destined to remain, for when I met him again at a later period he was clean-shaven and wore the ordinary up-to-date clothes. I saw much of him during that first stay in Paris, and we would spend many hours playing our compositions to one another. His " Jeux d'Eaux " was already published, but his string quartet, which he played to me from manuscript, he had only just completed. When a year or two later I heard this admirable work performed, it afforded me the greatest musical sensation I had experienced for some time ; apart from its content, it strikes me as the most *well-sounding* quartet that has ever been written.

My meeting with Debussy took place at the house of Mme. Bardac, the pale, fair-haired woman who eventually became his wife. At the time of which I write he was married to the dark and beautiful girl whose tragic death after her separation from Debussy was to throw the whole musical world of Paris into a turmoil of indignation. The story, in fact, is not a savoury one, and shows the French composer in an unfavourable light, though there may have been mitigating circumstances which gossip was careful to suppress.

Mme. Bardac had arranged our meeting for the afternoon, *not* the evening ; the reason being, she explained, that Debussy loved to come in a hat nearly as big as a parasol : a curious reason, indeed, since one does not, as a rule, wear one's hat in the house. But about twenty years ago in Paris there was an eccentric fashion connected with top hats which obliged their

owners to bring them into the drawing-room instead of leaving them in the hall. How this illogical custom worked at a dinner-party, I have forgotten : did we all take our top hats with us when we greeted our hostess and then hand them over to the butler to dispose of, or did we deposit them at our sides on the floor when we sat down, leaving them there to be collected by a domestic while we were at dinner ? Be this as it may, it was unfortunate for the man who paid a call in a bowler or a squash hat, as my friend Ernesto Consolo once did ; since he was shown up the back staircase, and had some difficulty in explaining that he was not a lackey sent on an errand !

Debussy, with his somewhat Christ-like face, marred by a slightly hydrocephalic forehead, was neither an unpleasant personality nor an impressive one. In manner he was, for a Frenchman, unusually quiet, both in the way and in the amount he talked—at any rate to strangers. Thus, when at Mme. Bardac's request I had played him some of my works, he said very little at the time, and only in later years when I visited him at his house in the Bois de Boulogne did I obtain his true opinion. As Mr Edwin Evans has pithily pointed out in an article which I may here quote—for it relieves me of a task for which I have no taste—

" The benediction which a great and distinctive figure in the musical world is sometimes moved to bestow paternally upon a younger aspirant is far from being an unmixed blessing when that aspirant himself has a distinctive personality. I have long thought that Debussy did Cyril Scott more harm than good in the eyes of the musical world when he gave him that testimonial which has been so often reprinted in the announcements of his different publishers. It has had no influence upon Scott himself, but, although many years have passed since then, it still influences the manner in which Scott's music is received, both here and on the Continent.

"Whenever a new personality appears in the musical world, there is always a tendency to invent a plausible genealogy for it. Who does not remember the old women of both sexes who, ten years ago, would lean back comfortably, and murmur ecstatically the word 'Debussy' every time they heard two consecutive major thirds, or a sequence of four whole tones? Others, who should have known better, charged even Ravel with being an imitator of Debussy, although the merest examination of the dates of their respective works would have sufficed to correct the delusion, even if their utterly divergent character were less obvious. Such being the atmosphere of those days, what chance could a young composer have whom Debussy publicly proclaimed to be one of the most interesting figures of his generation? There lies before me at this moment a German pamphlet under the title, '*Der neue Debussy*.' What a label to contend against! Whatever subordinate harmonic details are common to Debussy and Cyril Scott have long since belonged to the current vernacular. Even if that were not so, they are of little intrinsic importance. Who is there that believes to-day that there is any special magic in the added sixth, or in a predilection for conglomerations of notes clustered upon what Saint-Saëns called the adjectived ninth? But there it was. Scott was overshadowed by that testimonial. Strangely enough, it did him less harm in Germany than here, the reason being probably that Germany knew far less about Debussy than we did, and that to the majority of his listeners there the label was meaningless. Thus it happens that over a good section of the Continent, until three or four years ago, only two English composers were known, Elgar and Cyril Scott. In Salzburg, for instance, last year, musicians who wished to impress English visitors with the fact that they were not entirely ignorant of English music, made all the conversational play they could with those two names.

" It is no longer necessary to point out the complete disparity in the works of Debussy and Cyril Scott. I revive the legend merely as being one of the difficulties with which Scott has had to contend. Musically there is no affinity between them." [1]

The interesting point, however, is not so much what others think, as what Debussy himself thought. When I once asked him if he saw any resemblance between my own music and his, the answer was unequivocally in the negative. But I should add that I was then showing him my later works, and not those earlier ones which possessed that Pre-Raphaelite element already alluded to in a previous chapter.

If I were asked to describe Debussy's character, I should find it difficult ; therefore I can only give my very brief *impressions* of him, and nothing further. I think he was one of those few Frenchmen who sacrificed French politeness to sincerity : to those he admired and liked, he was charming ; to those he disadmired and disliked, he was the reverse. He once asked me rather naïvely if I consorted with the composers of my own country, and without waiting for an answer told me he did not consort with the composers of France. Certainly, even apart from *living* musicians, he had very pronounced dislikes, one of which was Beethoven, whom he described as *le vieux sourd*. On the other hand, he had an unusual admiration for Schumann's Piano Concerto, which struck me as rather strange, for without meaning to disparage that work, I should have thought it too unsubtle to appeal to his taste. As to Richard Strauss, although the orchestration seemed to him highly ingenious, he failed to recognise any intrinsic style in the works themselves, which offended him by their all too frequent banalities. But on this point we disagreed, for admitting these banalities, Strauss, when writing at his best, possesses so distinct a style that any failure on the part of a fellow-

[1] British Music Society Bulletin.

composer to recognise it seems astonishing. With regard to Tschaikowsky, of whom we also spoke, our opinions were more in unison; Tschaikowsky, be it remembered, was having a great vogue in England at the time—so great, by the way, that Sir Henry Wood told me his directors wanted him to conduct the "Pathétique" every night at nine o'clock at the Proms, which, thank God, he refused to do. That Debussy should ardently dislike this most popular of the Russian composers I could well understand, and I was not surprised when he deplored British taste which could set up such a vulgarian as an idol to be worshipped. According to *him*, the British had accepted the very worst "Russian" and overlooked the truly admirable ones, Rimsky-Korsakoff, Moussorgsky, and others.

In view of what Debussy has written about my own works, I ought to mention that he never saw my more popular compositions, but only those I thought worthy of his interest, namely, the more serious orchestral ones, and a few others such as the Piano Sonata, the Violin Sonata, the Second Suite for Piano (dedicated to him), and one or two short violin pieces. Of the orchestral compositions he admired most a rhapsody which has since been lost in Petrograd, and of the smaller works the Piano Sonata and the Second Suite. And I think these *were* my best efforts up till the time I last saw him in 1913. I had broken my journey in Paris on my way to Switzerland, in order to dine with him and his wife, and had spent a very enjoyable few hours in his studio, playing and talking. That studio, incidentally, struck me by its remarkable neatness—there was not a piece of music or music-paper to be seen anywhere, only a piano heavily covered with a silk cloth, a large and elegant desk, chairs, table, and bookshelves containing, among other volumes, several works of Kipling.

That evening, although Debussy was charming and affable to me as usual, he spoke despondently of his

own work, and was, I gathered, in the midst of an unproductive period.

"My style," he said, "is a limited one, and I seem to have reached the end of it."

I made some encouraging denial, although I silently agreed with the first part of the sentence, and told him I felt sure he would get a new influx of ideas before very long. But I have come to believe that in this I was mistaken, for most of his compositions after that year have fallen short of his previous standard, and he seems merely to have repeated himself instead of creating anything new. The distressing truth was that his health was on the decline, and he was in a few years to die of that most dreaded of all diseases—cancer.

But I have wandered far ahead of the time of my story. The year in which I first met Debussy I also met—and in Paris too—a girl who was to become from that time onward until her death, shortly before the war, my most cherished woman friend; this was Maude Roosevelt, a second cousin of the President. For this really wonderful friendship I am indebted to the American composer Henry Hadley, who had been brought by my old colleague, Clemens von Franckenstein, to see me in Liverpool. Both he and Hadley had just come off the steamer on which they had sailed from New York; and Franckenstein had promised his friend—who afterwards told me—that if he would break his journey in Liverpool, he might hear some rather entertaining and novel harmonies! Hadley had been sceptical, and said he'd seen too many of these young composers—they were all unoriginal and disappointing—but Franckenstein prevailed, and so they had arrived that morning at eight o'clock, to find me still in bed.

As I took to Henry Hadley at once, and was delighted with his breezy Americanisms, his jokes, and his enthusiasm, it came upon me as a most joyful surprise to find him in Paris. That evening he was in the

company of two striking American girls and the well-known playwright Mr Edward Knoblock, whom I met on that occasion for the first time. One of the girls was Maude Roosevelt, the other her cousin, Miss Julia Twells, the novelist, since married and living in Brussels. It expresses my meaning if I say that Hadley's greeting was as breezy as himself, and that in the space of a few seconds he had told me he was staying in the same Pension as these two "girls," and would expect me to "blow in" at the earliest opportunity; Miss R., who was studying singing, had a piano in her room and would, he felt sure, "be glad to have me show him my latest compositions." And I did not wait for a second invitation, but went to see them the very next evening, played to them, and came away very late, not knowing if I was in love with Miss Roosevelt, or she with me. The fact was, I had previously had no experience whatever of American girls and their effusive manners, and had never been subjected to such unqualified praise from any woman before. She "gushed," but in what seemed such a sincere way that I did not know what to make of it at all. If she had been less beautiful I should have felt embarrassed and rather disgusted; but as it was, my heart became endangered instead, and I could hardly await the time when I should see her again. Fortunately for me, Hadley was of such a genial disposition that he was always pleased to see me at his Pension, and that invariably meant a vision of Miss Roosevelt as well. Besides which we came later on to go *à quatre* to cafés, concerts, and theatres — not omitting the Grand Guignol, which gave me an excuse to clutch her hand at the most blood-curdling moments.

Maudie, as I soon came to call her, was tall, pale, and *distinguée*, with refined, clear-cut features, and a profusion of amber-coloured hair. In manner she was vivacious, and had just enough accent to render her speech piquant and fascinating. All the years I knew

her she was again and again in the throes of some desperate romance—mostly unreciprocated on her side and hence not devoid of its inconveniences. Already that winter in Paris there was some foreigner who showered presents upon her, among which, I remember, were tins of powdered milk, for she was delicate, and he supposed she needed this type of sustenance. From what I gathered, he seemed to be in a pretty acute state of love-sickness, and it required much tact and manœuvring on her part to manage him. What was eventually his fate I am unable to say, but certainly it was not marriage with my beautiful friend ; when she left Paris I heard no more of him, and forgot to ask any pertinent questions.

Those who imagine I am now about to relate a *grande passion* of my own will be disappointed in their expectations ; my feelings for Maudie, though at first tinged with a certain amount of sentimentality, were soon to become of a more elevated nature. After all, sentiment of that type is a banality to be gloated over in every cheap and illiterate novel ; but the affection which for years I possessed for Maudie is so rarely to be found that even the true literary artist seldom introduces it into his books—people would dismiss it as unconvincing. To express myself tersely, I should say that I began by thinking myself *in* love with Maudie and ended by *loving* her : the two sentiments being by no means identical. How divergent they are, at any rate in my opinion, may be realised from the fact that I have never once wanted to marry a woman with whom I was *in* love : for that I have always possessed too few illusions, also I learnt some valuable lessons from the lips of Mrs Stevenson. And yet if I say that I *could* have married Maude Roosevelt with the conviction that I should have been happy, I do not mean that I specially wanted to marry her, and, of course, still less that I was " dying to marry her." Personally, I consider that any man who is " dying to

marry " any woman will never know happiness, because his nature is a far too selfish one; its keynote is *I want*, and the result is disastrous. When Oscar Wilde wrote that a man could be happy with any woman as long as he wasn't in love with her, he uttered a very wise saying. As soon as the element of in-love-ness comes into the waters of an otherwise calm relationship, one must look out for breakers. I grant there is ecstasy while it lasts, but even that ecstasy is marred by a thousand anxieties, and when it is over—well, everybody knows without my telling them.

My temperament is such that I have been in love with many women—I blush to say how many—and I have also been very fond of many women, but I have never felt the same ecstatically platonic and fraternal love that I felt for Maude Roosevelt—it was as if she had been my twin sister. I am aware this statement may seem not to tally with what I wrote a moment ago, but surely a twin sister would make an excellent life-companion, and the sole reason for marriage *need* not be the propagation of the species. As a matter of fact, Maudie was on the point of marrying somebody else when she died, but when she accepted that somebody else—I will be discreet—she stipulated that he was in no way whatever to interfere with *our* friendship; and to do him justice, I think he never *would* have gone contrary to her wishes.

I cannot remember much more about my stay in Paris that year, nor how long I actually remained; but there are a few impressions which still live in my memory. I recollect that Henry Hadley showed considerable surprise over what he deemed the daring of my harmonies.

" My ! " he would say, " if I wrote harmonies like that, my publishers would bung me out."

" Publishers be blowed ! " I would retort; " no publishers will be likely to look at these particular things of mine for many a long year—and by then they'll sound as mild as milk."

But Hadley was not to be convinced ; he believed in training the public slowly.

I had met the painter Jacques Blanche in London, where I had dined with him one evening, which reminds me he introduced me on that occasion to " Mr Symons."

" Any relation of Arthur Symons ? " I asked, shaking hands with the gentleman.

" Well," he smiled wanly, " I don't quite know how to answer that question — you see, I *am* Arthur Symons ! "

It is a pity that people so often fail to introduce eminent persons by their full names.

Having, as I just said, met Monsieur Blanche in London, I called upon him in his studio at Auteuil, where I was introduced to Degas and some literary " big bugs." Blanche painted a portrait of me one afternoon, and while I was " sitting," remarked : " I am now doing the best bit of painting I have ever done." But I was far too drowsy and " headachy " to take much interest. I have never seen that portrait since, and wonder what has become of that " best bit of painting." Jacques Blanche was a musical enthusiast, and we used to play *à quatre mains* together or run through the latest works of Debussy, whom Blanche greatly admired. He had very beautiful and *soigné* fingers ; certainly there was nothing of the Bohemian Quartier Latin element about *him*. He dressed in the latest fashion, and did not deign to wear an overall ; yet he never besmeared himself with paints. How different from Charles Bonnier, who could hardly do a lightning sketch without covering his hands and his clothes and even his face with colours !

I left Paris with regret—more especially because of Maudie—and after spending a week in London returned to our cosy little house in Liverpool, and to the calm atmosphere of my philosophic and selfless friend, Dr Bonnier.

CHAPTER XI

TWOFOLD "CONVERSION"

Not long after my return to Liverpool I went to stay with some cousins called Richardson in Southport, a town I consider one of the pleasantest in the north of England. On my arrival I found them practising a very curious *régime*—they were for the most part living on apples and raw Quaker oats.

"We don't expect *you* to adopt this extraordinary diet," they said, "but as it's doing us a lot of good we intend to stick to it."

Mr Richardson had been ailing for some time, and after trying various cures with no result, had gone to a sanatorium run by a parson, who advocated pure and natural food as a remedy for all ills. I had, up to that date, never busied myself with dietetics, nor, unfortunately for me, had any doctor whom I had consulted for my headaches and depression; but seeing the marked improvement in my cousin's health, I decided to renounce my bacon and eggs for breakfast and beefsteak for lunch, and give this diet a fair trial. I started with it on a Saturday, and the next day had the worst sick headache I had ever experienced; nevertheless I stuck to my resolve, and on the Monday I was rewarded for my pains. For years I had not felt so well—all sense of fatigue, all depression, all my headache had gone: I was in ecstasy and thought I had discovered the universal panacea. Instead of dragging myself along the street, I walked with a surprising buoyancy and exuberance of spirit; instead of finding it almost too much effort to carry on a con-

versation, I chattered and laughed and behaved like a schoolboy—the whole world had become transformed. No more doctors with their poisonous prescriptions for me! In future I would be my own doctor, and study every book on natural therapeutics I could lay my hands on; then with knowledge to back me up, I would persuade others to cure their ills as I had cured mine. Nor was my enthusiasm to be damped by a doctor who told me I would no doubt find myself benefited for a time, but in a few months I'd get all my headaches back again. I did not and could not believe him; yet, alas! on that one point he was right—my headaches *did* come back, but that " tired feeling " and those fits of depression had departed for good.

My visit to Southport, however, was to have even more momentous consequences—it indirectly brought about an entire change in my inner self. While reading a book called *Avenues to Health*, by Eustace Miles, I came across copious quotations from Swami Vivekananda's *Raja Yoga*, and these struck me as so replete with wisdom that I immediately ordered a copy. And I shall not easily forget my feelings on that mild, sunny afternoon when, walking up and down the little grass-plot at the back of my cousin's house, I read that remarkable exposition of the Science of Yoga. It was the book for which I seemed to have been seeking all my life; it showed me how a man might transform his own consciousness and become *unconditionally* happy. There was no fanaticism, no sentimentality, no hysteria about this book; it was sane, scientific, logical, and tolerant; it was also essentially poetic. True, there were some statements relative to the soul and its reincarnation in successive lives with which I could not agree, but I dismissed these at the time as no hindrance to my acceptance of what the book had in other respects to teach. I also commenced the practices advocated, namely, breath control and mind control; and soon, to my intense

delight, found that I began to experience those exalted states of consciousness promised by the author to all faithful practitioners. In fact, the change in me was so marked, that I remember Holland Smith, who came to stay with me at Easter that year, observing with considerable surprise: "What on earth's happened to you? You are quite a different person. You're not only far more vivacious, but—although it sounds a paradox—far calmer than I've ever known you." I told him my vivacity was due to an alteration in diet, and my calmness to a very ancient science which I had just discovered.

Perhaps one day I shall write "My Occult Life" in all its detail, for to embody all my spiritual adventures in this book would be to swell it to unpublishable proportions. Suffice it, if I here state that from the day that book *Raja Yoga* came into my hands, the study of all forms of mysticism and transcendental philosophy became for me a passion; and not only that, but I found in their study a new and great source of musical inspiration. I must admit, however, that it took me more than a year to convince myself of personal immortality; I even fought against the idea with every argument I could devise; but in the end intellectual honesty had perforce to prevail; I now find myself much in the position of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, who in effect maintains that any person who chooses to study the evidence must inevitably become convinced. Perhaps the most interesting part of my own development was that I did not *wish* to become convinced. I was perfectly satisfied to think that with death ended all personal consciousness, and I wanted nothing in the shape of heaven either as a reward for my few good deeds or for any other reason. Oblivion could certainly not be unhappiness, so why demand anything different?

But of course, the mistake which I made—and which so many others make—was in thinking that truth has

anything to do with personal preference; when people lightly say that to be " snuffed out like a candle " is good enough for *them*, they say it as if their own personal beliefs or disbeliefs affected truth itself. As psycho-analysis points out, people usually believe what they *want* to believe, and will advance the most hair-splitting unlikelihoods to bolster up those beliefs. When sceptics felt an aversion to the idea of mental telepathy, they invented explanations to account for that phenomenon a thousand times more difficult for others to accept than the simple fact of telepathy itself. It is little wonder that a witty investigator remarked: " What always astonishes me, is the *credulity* of the sceptic ! " For my own part, I consider it shows great credulity to assume that every psychic, clairvoyant, or medium is a liar and a fraud; or that because some of them, when their faculties temporarily forsake them, resort to invention, the whole thing from beginning to finish is deception. In that case, every violinist, singer, or pianist—including myself—is a fraud. If, while playing in public, my memory fails me, I certainly do not get up and say: " Ladies and gentlemen, I've forgotten this portion of my piece . . . ! " I simply resort to *fraud*, and invent a few bars until I get out of my difficulty. Orators when in trouble adopt the same course: finding themselves at a loss, they talk about something quite different from what they originally intended. I believe the one entirely honest speaker I have met is Mr Bernard Shaw. He once said to me: " I was in the middle of a speech when suddenly I quite forgot what I was saying, and had to ask someone in the front row. There was a roar of laughter, but after that I felt the audience even more with me than before."

But one needs to be G. B. S. to carry off a mishap of that kind ! Poor Henry James, when " saying a few words " to a large girls' college in America at which I played, was less fortunate and had to be helped out

in a different manner. He had got into one of his involved and interminable sentences, and showed so little sign of being able to extricate himself that the whole audience became intensely and sympathetically uncomfortable. Finally, the headmistress took the bull by the horns and started to applaud ; Mr Henry James smiled, bowed, and looked as pleased as if he had delivered the most magnificent oration. I gather he, too, would have shown himself a fraud but for the timely intervention of that headmistress.

But to revert to events in Liverpool.

My friends and champions, Mr and Mrs Lüthy, had decided to go and live at Vevey, Switzerland, where they had taken a villa, and of course their departure meant a loss to me ; but as they invited me to spend the summer holidays of every year with them, there were compensations ; there were also unforeseen troubles. I went to stay with them the very first summer after their arrival, yet my visit was not an unqualified success. It was one thing to hear me play for other people's pleasure : it was quite another to hear me compose. I further contrived to make myself unpopular by my absent-mindedness ; quite forgetting the appearance of Mr Lüthy's garden, in which he took great pride, I thoughtlessly threw my cigarette-ends about, and in other ways offended his sense of orderliness. The result was, that though he found my company pleasant enough in the small doses in which he had hitherto been accustomed to take it, he did not find it so in a large one extending over six weeks. Musicians were, no doubt, interesting people ; but as soon as they began to disfigure one's garden, they had drawbacks. *I* also found that six weeks in a house full of growing children had *its* drawbacks, so that when I came to take my leave, the farewells were not as touching as they otherwise might have been. Yet in spite of everything I had contrived to make a new and

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lasting friend, a Fräulein Louise Bader, who had been my fellow-guest ; and I mention her because of the curious fact that when we first met I was so antipathetic to her that she requested me not to shake hands with her when we said good-night ! Even candour is seldom so pronounced as this. . . .

When I got back to London at the beginning of September, the " Proms " were in full swing, and Sir Henry Wood had arranged to perform my Second Symphony. But I remember little of the event, seeing there was no mishap as at Darmstadt with my Symphony No. 1, to impress it on my mind. Nor can I recollect anything of special interest that occurred that autumn. When Christmas came, I found myself once again for a month in Paris, whence I journeyed *via* Bingerbrück-Bingen to Frankfurt.

Whilst in Switzerland that summer I had written to Stefan George, asking him to forgive me my indiscretions of a year or two ago, and to take me back into favour ; I added that I had some translations of his poems into English by a friend of mine, which I particularly wanted to show him. And the reply I received was characteristically brief ; it merely stated that if I wished to see him, he would be at Bingen up till such-and-such a date, and that I should advise him of the day of my arrival.

The first few moments of that interview were not very comfortable ones ; although Stefan George was only twelve years my senior, he might have been thirty from the impressive effect he made upon me. Not that on either side anything was said relating to the breach that had been between us, but my welcome had in it an element of considerable reserve. Stefan did not meet me at the station, as he formerly would have done, but left me to go to my hotel and then call at his house in the evening. It was only when I brought out the translations of my supposed friend that our relations became less strained, and he forgot every-

thing in his interest in the translator's achievements. How I came to give myself away, I cannot recollect; but when he discovered that the "friend" was a myth, he gave me a playful slap in the face and said I would always be an incorrigible *farceur*.

Except for a streak of white in his hair, there was no perceptible change in him, and I felt as I had so often done before, that he represented in persons what a place like Siena represents in towns; to look at him and to hear him talk was to be wafted back several centuries into the romantic atmosphere of the renaissance.

The next day I took the train on to Frankfurt, where I visited all my old friends and a new one, Mr F. S. Kelly, the Diamond Sculler, whom I had met at Gardiner's, and who was now studying piano and composition at the Frankfurt Conservatoire. To his fellow-students F. S. Kelly was "*ein gelungener Kerl*,"[1] who excited much comment by playing at the Conservatoire evening concerts in brown shoes, turned-up trousers, and a flannel shirt; but he lives more especially in my memory because he was a most efficient corrective for snobs. I recollect his behaviour at a luncheon-party given by a woman who took great pains to drag into the conversation the names of all her grandee friends; in fact, I was quite sorry for her as the luncheon progressed, for Kelly greeted her every snobbish allusion with such outbursts of laughter, that finally she left the room in a state of complete disgruntlement.

F. S. Kelly, I regret to say, was one of the many who never returned from the war. He left behind him a few compositions that are quite pleasing, but not touched with the magic wand of creativeness. Athleticism and the capacity to produce great art, I fear, must not be looked for in one and the same person; for undoubtedly athletics de-sensitise the body, and an insensitive body is a hindrance to inspiration.

[1] Approximately: "a killing sort of chap."

During my stay in Frankfurt I naturally went over to Darmstadt to visit my friend Herr Willem de Haan and his charming daughter. I also at his request took over my latest compositions, some of which he pronounced to be " quite mad." This verdict pleased me rather than otherwise, for it showed I was not stagnating, and was still writing sounds which required a certain amount of getting used to on the part of the older generation. All the same a few years later Herr de Haan had the broad-mindedness to invite me to participate in a Musical Festival held under the patronage of the Grand Duke of Hessen, who had considerable admiration for the English and all things English. This Festival was, I think, held in June, and Darmstadt with its abundance of trees and flowering syringas was looking exceptionally beautiful. Fräulein de Haan, her fiancé—a most entertaining Pole—and I constituted a very united trio and amused ourselves greatly at the expense of all the freaks who visited the Festival; among these was the composer, Max Reger. He was a most repulsive type of Bavarian, with a very fat body, flat feet, and a parchment-coloured face. His manners were in keeping with his appearance, loud, blustering, and aggressive, especially when under the influence of alcohol, of which he imbibed freely. At meals he " took the table," and entertained (?) us with an incessant stream of stories—most of them chestnuts—which he made applicable to himself. He told us that a man had once asked him what time the last train went to such-and-such a place, and that he had answered: " The time I cannot tell you, but this much I *can* tell you—you and I will never live to see it." As I could not raise a laugh at this story which I had often heard before—besides which I did not think Reger ought to be encouraged—he turned to me and exclaimed acrimoniously: " Why, you're not laughing! "

" Oh, I'm laughing all right *inside*," I said, without

moving a muscle; a retort which apparently amused Fräulein de Haan and her fiancé, for they have reminded me of it whenever I have met them.

It was evident that my music pleased Reger as little as I did myself. At the *Conversazione* given after one of the chamber concerts at which I had played my "Dagobah" and accompanied some of my songs, he came up to me and mumbled bibulously: "Herr Shcott, let me give you a word of advice: the next time an idea occurs to you, don't write it down, *aber schreiben Sie daneben.*"[1]

I made a low mock bow in acknowledgement of his advice, even though I could not understand the profundity of it. After which I was amused to hear his wife remark to him: "What's the use saying anything to these young composers? They are never grateful."

Herr de Haan had asked me to send the MS. of the songs in question from England, so that he might show it to the singer in advance of the festival. But there was a note about which he was uncertain, so he wrote to me to know whether it ought to be an F♯ or an F♮. As I was busy at the time and had nothing further to communicate, I sent him a post-card with exactly two words upon it—"*Ja, fis*"—(Yes, F♯) and my initials. I have never been permitted to forget that post-card and its—to the Teutonic mind—unprecedented brevity! And I admit it certainly bore a striking contrast to Herr de Haan's own very courteous and flowery letters written to me—in English—after each visit. In these letters, among the expressions of other friendly sentiments, he has hoped that "I will pay to and fro a visit to Darmstadt, and bring by that occasion such nice compositions as till now."

When I last saw Herr de Haan, some eighteen months ago, he was very little changed. Although he had retired and given up his post of conductor at

[1] Approximately: "write it out of tune."

what was once the Grand Ducal Opera, he still retained his almost abnormal " energeticness," was as brisk and alert as ever, and even amused himself by practising Beethoven Sonatas for two hours every morning. His splendid health was due to " the solidity of his life," as my publisher in Mainz wrote to me immediately after the end of the war.

CHAPTER XII

JESTS AND JOKERS

AFTER leaving Frankfurt that year, I went to Berlin and stayed with Alan Gardiner, the eminent Egyptologist, and his wife, in their capacious flat in the Matthäikirchstrasse. I had met Dr Alan Gardiner at his brother's, Balfour Gardiner, and was glad of the opportunity of becoming better acquainted with this most interesting man. Maude Roosevelt had also migrated to Berlin with the idea of studying singing with the celebrated Lilli Lehmann, so that with all these friends, including Lechter, I looked forward to a very pleasurable few weeks. . . . It was only necessary to know the Alan Gardiners in order to become exceedingly fond of them. Alan's inimitable chuckle in itself endeared him to me almost from the moment I met him, and as to the vivacious and original Heddie, there was not a dull moment to be experienced in *her* company. She is of Finnish and Austrian extraction, and although her English nowadays is almost perfect, at the time of which I write it frequently gave us cause for good-humoured amusement. I remember her once going into a room over the mantelpiece of which were a number of brass articles.

"But how bright you keep your haberdashery!" she exclaimed, looking at them in unfeigned admiration. Another instance of her captivating "malaprops" was connected with a cellist, who, she said, on being recalled by an enthusiastic audience, walked on to the platform and *ostensibly* blew his nose. She meant, of course, *ostentatiously*—but even so, I think that

cellist's behaviour somewhat eccentric. I only wish I could remember more of her *bon mots*, but my memory is unfortunately losing some of its " cunning."

I spent my days in Berlin that time in writing those essays which later on appeared as *The Philosophy of Modernism*, a title, by the way, which caused some people to imagine my book bore some theological significance. I also wrote some verses, and made further translations of Stefan George's works. The poet himself had come to Berlin, and I was often requested to read my translations to his circle. I say read, but he had taught me to *intone* poetry rather than to read it in the ordinary way.

It has often struck me that poetry-lovers might be divided into two classes: those who read it as if it were the newspaper, and those who read it as if it were the Bible—there is no happy medium. The Stefan George circle used almost to chant it, but to my mind in a manner almost too monotonous to be pleasant, especially when it lasted with short intervals for a whole evening. First one young man would get up and " chant " a few verses, after which the master, as they called him, nodded approval; then there would be a brief pause in which only whispers were permitted, and another young man would get up and chant more verses—and so it would continue until refreshments were brought in. Usually at about ten-thirty, Stefan George would mysteriously disappear without saying good-night, and that was the sign for the breaking-up of the party.

When I saw Lechter that year, it was to discover a new bond of sympathy between us—he had become a theosophist. Not that either he or I labelled ourselves as such or belonged to the society, but every man who believes in brotherhood and studies the science of religion is a theosophist at heart, whether he calls himself one or not. But whereas my admiration was more especially directed towards the Indian sages,

particularly Swami Vivekananda, his was directed towards Madame Blavatzky and her "Secret Doctrine," a fact which, strangely enough, in the end caused him to be "dropped" by the Stefan George circle, even though he had worked for it from very early days. This circle, if the truth be told, had two very definite aversions—one was woman and the other music. The viewpoint they adopted towards the former was a very ancient one, namely, that woman was inferior to man, and her attainments, intellectual or artistic, were not worthy of consideration, still less of admiration. This being so, she was certainly not to be encouraged, and the Georgites felt it part of their mission in life to *dis*courage her. As to music, it—the circle—held it to be the most inferior of all the arts, and musicians the most unintellectual of all artists; hence, in common with women, they too were to be discouraged. Whether this doctrine existed in such a virulent form in the earliest days of the Stefan George circle is doubtful, seeing that S. G. interested himself in those few simple songs I had composed to his own verses, but that it has now assumed the proportions of a dogma to be accepted by all the Georgites is evident, and was already evident in 1913–1914, the last time I saw Stefan George; though Lechter, who gave me all the latest information, I saw as recently as last year.

It may be that what I here write has little interest for English readers, but I am content to run this risk, for I realise that a day will come when Stefan George will be recognised as one of the very great poets of the world, and his *movement* will form part of the history of literature. There is also his personality, which must "live," as the personality of Lord Byron has "lived," and will continue to live long after his poetry has become unreadable.

The evenings at the Gardiners' flat were most enjoyable and never to be forgotten. As they kept a more or

less " open house," a variety of interesting people, scholars, scientists, sculptors, artists, musicians, and diplomats, crossed their threshold. One man, whose name I have forgotten, used to entertain us with descriptions, rather *à la* Mr Creevey, of Court life in Berlin, and of the would-be artistic activities of the German Emperor. Another, an Egyptologist, would relate to Gardiner some of his most recent discoveries. Sometimes the pianist, Richard Buhlig, would play Debussy to us, or that most admirable artist Miss Jean Waterston, who was then in Berlin, would sing Hebridean songs. For although Alan Gardiner does not possess his brother's creative talents, he is inordinately fond of music, and I believe would listen to it every evening of his life if he had the chance, and could remain in the congenial atmosphere of his own house—I nearly said armchair—instead of exchanging it for the garish illumination of the concert-hall. Thus I was often called upon to minister to his musical needs, and as he affected such a comically winsome way of asking me, I could seldom refuse.

It seems, however, that on one occasion my behaviour, to say the least, was eccentric, though I have forgotten the incident myself, and hence am dependent on Mrs Gardiner's memory for the story.

She had invited some friends of a particularly non-Bohemian type to dinner, and had asked me beforehand if I would play. This I promised to do ; but when the time came, felt I had dined far too well and was not in the mood, so that a good deal of persuasion was necessary to induce me to keep my promise. Finally, I went with a rather bad grace to the piano and started to play—not Wagner, as I so frequently did, but modernised versions of " The Honeysuckle and the Bee," and " Hello, my Baby," followed by " Finiculi, finicula," " After the Ball," " Lousiana Loo," and many others, ending after about forty minutes with a loud and scandalously harmonised version of " God Save

the King," preceded by an improvised fugue on "Sailing Away." But that was not all; when I had played my last chord, I got up from the piano, and without looking at anybody or saying a word, walked straight out of the room.

During this performance, Mrs Gardiner tells me, the faces of her guests presented a study in expressions. Those tunes seemed familiar—and yet somehow—no—had they really heard them before?—besides Mr Scott was a serious artist and it sounded in some ways like serious music. They were nonplussed; moreover, after it had gone on for thirty minutes, they began to grow restive. When was this extraordinary young man going to stop? Had he forgotten there *were* listeners? Wasn't it about time Mr Gardiner intervened?

I regret that history does not relate what happened while I was out of the room, for my friend seems to have forgotten who broke the awkward silence and with what remark. Nevertheless, although my disappearance may have seemed unaccountable, its reason was in reality a very simple one—I had gone to change my underclothes. What with central heating, together with the luxury of an open fire, *and* my exertions at the piano, I had become extremely hot. Not that I perspire as profusely as Mr Albert Coates or Mr Lamond, but my skin is healthy and active enough to cause me discomfort. And at that I must leave this enigmatical story.

It was during my stay in Berlin that I received a letter from Dr Bonnier telling me that our "co-habitation" at Canning Street must come to an end. His old nurse, who, with the aid of a working housekeeper, had looked after us, was finding the stairs too much for her impaired vitality, so Bonnier with characteristic unselfishness had decided to take unfurnished rooms.

Thus, after some deliberation, I decided to leave Liverpool altogether and to settle in London. The

breaking-up of our home, however, was not to be immediate, but to take place just before the summer vacation, so that I had plenty of time to search for a domicile.

I took leave of the Gardiners and my other friends with regret, and crossed from Flushing to Queenborough on a very windy day. So rough was the sea that, with the exception of two serio-comic Jews who occasionally tried the effects of fresh air, I was the only passenger on deck, and stood for ten hours holding on to a seat because I dared not go down below for fear of being ill. . . . On arriving in town I stayed with the Suarts for a week or two and visited my publisher and various friends, prior to returning to Liverpool.

It was, I believe, during this visit that I met Ernesto Consolo, whom I have already, though very briefly, mentioned. Miss Suart and I were invited by Mrs Derenberg — formerly Miss Ilona Eibenschütz—to a luncheon-party one day; and at this party there appeared a dark, clean-shaven man who, as he informed me, was much interested in my "Pierrot Pieces," and had played them at various concerts. I took to Consolo at once, as everybody does, for he is a *raconteur* of the most amusing type, and seems almost to attract adventures as a magnet attracts steel. I should mention that he is half English and half Italian, and speaks both languages equally well. For a number of years he owned a villa in Lugano, but has now settled in Florence, where I last saw him in 1915.

It is not uncomplimentary to him to say that he is a most unusual-looking man; by this I do not mean that he dresses oddly; he is unusual-looking by nature and not by artifice. Above all, his smile is particularly striking, and a feature never to be forgotten, especially when he tells stories against himself, which he does with laudable frankness. There was a joke played on him by Max Mossel, the violinist, which is too good to be allowed to disappear into oblivion. That he should

tell it that day at Mrs Derenberg's was owing to some salmon with which we had been served.

"Delicious," said Consolo, who appreciated good food.

"There are three fish I particularly like," I observed, "one is salmon, and the other two show a very plebeian taste—they are kippers and finnan haddock."

"Bravo!" exclaimed Consolo, "let's shake hands, I'm gluttonously fond of finnan haddock. Which reminds me of a joke that young scoundrel Max Mossel played on me."

We were all attention.

"He and I went over to Ireland to play at a concert. We stayed at a hotel for a night and a day, I've forgotten the name of it, but it's of no importance. One gets delicious finnan haddock in Ireland, and as it's not to be got in Lugano where I live, I made up my mind to have a perfect orgy of it while I had the chance. I ordered it for breakfast, I ordered it again for lunch, though the waiter looked at me rather strangely, then I ordered it again for dinner. This time the waiter got rude, and pretended I couldn't have it. I lost my temper and there was a row; and the fellow went out, banging the door after him.

"'These Irish,' I said to Mossel.

"'Yes, these Irish,' he agreed; 'and, by the way, while you're waiting for that confounded haddock of yours, I just remember I've forgotten to lock my portmanteau'—and he disappeared. Presently the waiter came back with my haddock. I thought him extraordinarily affable all of a sudden, but didn't give the matter much thought until we were on the boat. Then I said to Mossel: 'It's just occurred to me—I wonder what came over that waiter: was he afraid he wouldn't get his tip—or what?' Mossel began to laugh. 'Well, if you want to know,' he said, 'I went out and had a talk with him. I said, it's a great mistake

you made exciting that gentlemen like that. The fact is, a year ago he had an accident to his head, and ever since then he's got the delusion that he can't eat anything except finnan haddock '!"

There was an appreciative roar of laughter.

"The amusing part of it is," Consolo went on, "that once when I was telling that story, an old lady said: 'Did you really, Mr Consolo? I'm very sorry to hear *that*. . . .'"

But I myself was the victim of a more inconvenient practical joke, and one which showed extremely bad taste on the part of the joker. Having spent a few weeks at Matlock in company with some friends, I went on to Buxton to see my parents, who had taken rooms there for the summer. As one of these friends —a young woman with whom, by the way, my relations were completely platonic—had got rather tired of Matlock, she decided that she also would spend a few days at Buxton; so we both put up at the same hotel. It was, perhaps, an unconventional thing to do—but after all my parents, who were with us most of the day, lent a certain air of respectability to the undertaking. In the hotel there was a distinctly pretty girl who looked as if she would have liked to make friends with us, but I noticed that her mother—obviously thinking we were not proper people to associate with—was greatly averse to this. As they always sat near us in the lounge, we could not help occasionally overhearing their conversation; and in this way we learned their name, and also that they lived at Blackburn.

On leaving Buxton I took the train to Huddersfield to stay with Dr Eaglefield Hull, in order to give him certain details for the book he had decided to write on my work. In the train I met a man whom I had known for years, and who did a good deal of travelling on business between the various industrial towns in Lancashire and Yorkshire.

"Do you happen to know some people in Blackburn called X.?" I asked him.

"No," he said, "why?"

I told him what I have just related. "It was merely," I added, "that I thought if you *did* happen to know them, you might have explained to Miss X. that I'm not a beastly stand-offish sort of person, and would have loved to have talked to her if her mother hadn't look so disapproving."

"Oh, that's quite an easy matter," he said, "I shall probably run across them one of these days, and if not . . ."

"Good gracious, it's not as important as all that!" I replied.

The next time I met him he said, with a mischievous twinkle in his eye: "Did you ever hear from that girl?"

"What girl?"

"That girl in Blackburn."

"Why on earth should I?"

"Because I wrote to her."

"You *didn't*. . . . What on earth did you say?"

"I composed a charming letter which she must have thought came from you."

"You don't mean to tell me you wrote it in my name?" I exclaimed, aghast. "Are you aware it's forgery?"

He laughed that irresistible laugh which always "turns away wrath."

"You're pulling my leg," I added.

"I'm damned if I am!"

And to this day I don't know whether he did actually write to that girl or not. Probably I shall never know—for he went out to Africa and I have not seen him since. But in future I shall be very chary of what I tell people who are so constituted that they cannot resist a practical joke.

CHAPTER XIII

MY PARENTS

When the time arrived for the dismantling of the Liverpool house my mother came over to help me. I, too, had decided to take unfurnished rooms, so some of the things were given to our housekeeper and the rest stored for a time.

Since leaving my home at Oxton my relations with my parents were entirely harmonious. I visited them on an average once a week, and if they still considered me a person to be taken in the main *cum grano salis*, they were no longer perturbed by my peculiarities, but accepted them with amused indulgence. Only once or twice did my mother break out into lamentations that " I was not as other men " : one of these occasions being my sister's marriage. Really, she had said, for the wedding I must wear a top hat instead of the preposterous " wide-awake." And although my cousin from Southport, who was staying in the house, mildly protested on the grounds that I would look ridiculous, my mother was not to be convinced. " He'll look far more ridiculous in his other hat," she argued, " besides, what'll people think ? "

As I had ceased to be so inconsiderate of people's feelings, and also to bother very much how I looked, my mother obtained her wish, and I appeared " on the occasion of the marriage of Mabel Louise Scott to Edwin J. Lee " in a chimney-pot hat ! But this was the only family wedding I could bring myself to attend ; and when a few years later my favourite cousin, Gilbert Scott, got married, I went as far as the

gate, and then, overcome by a fit of shyness, turned back. . . . The reason was that in my birthplace twenty years ago I always felt like a "curiosity," and to meet a number of people who had known me since childhood was an ordeal I was unable to face. Oxton at the present time is a very different place from what it was in my extreme youth ; in those days I had been thrown among a set who thought it a sin to go to a theatre, and were possessed of other notions to match. They were good folk, but their field of ideas and of actions was limited. I believe my mother only entered a theatre twice in her life, and then she felt very uncomfortable and troubled in spirit. My father, on the other hand, was not so orthodox or puritanical ; he had spent too much time in studying the Greek Bible to accept the narrow interpretation of any one Church or clergyman. By the end of his life he had even been won over to many theosophical ideas, which says much for the elasticity of his mind. Altogether my father was a remarkable man, and a pattern of sobriety. If he had one vice, it was that he had no vices of any kind ; his lips had never touched a drop of alcohol, nor a cigar, pipe, or cigarette, a fact I was not permitted to overlook, for when he had not seen me for some time he would say drily : "Well, I see you haven't learnt not to smoke yet!" His fare was the most frugal, and even tea and coffee were beverages too stimulating for *his* palate ; he preferred plain cold water at every meal except breakfast, when he would drink cocoa. Any time between four and six he rose in the morning, and seldom went to bed later than ten o'clock. The two absorbing interests of his life were his books and his garden. He walked five miles a day, and having little inclination for active games or sport, that was the only form of exercise he took. How very different from his in another sense equally remarkable brother, George Scott, who had loved everything in the nature of sport, and had paid

HENRY SCOTT
GREEK SCHOLAR, AGED 47, DIED IN HIS 76TH YEAR
THE AUTHOR'S FATHER

dearly for his taste, having fallen and injured himself so severely while shooting, that for nearly forty years he lay prostrate on an invalid's couch and had to be wheeled from one place to the other. Yet with all his sufferings, his patience was almost unprecedented; so exemplary, indeed, that his vicar, Canon Robson,[1] who, by the way, baptized me, used to say that to visit him was "a sermon in itself."

But I was writing of my father. As a child I had stood rather in awe of him; not that he was unduly severe, for I have never seen him really angry, but I was unduly sensitive. Nerves were my principal trouble, and a tendency to be too easily moved: if I heard the organ in church, or my mother sing, or had to take leave of those I cared for, I burst into tears. All this being so, I was unable to stand even the mildest rebuke from my father, without being precipitated into a state of fear quite incommensurate with the occasion. It may be that his fine, powerful build and studious appearance were in part responsible; for although he was always polite and kind, he was neither the jolly nor the hail-fellow-well-met type of Englishman. He could be extremely witty in a dry sort of way, and was fond of a joke, but he seldom, if ever, showed exuberance of spirit. Yet, in spite of his strong physique, he had a sensitive and highly-strung temperament, but it was exceptionally well-controlled. His capacity for making friends was limited, and of real "pals," as the present generation understands the word, he had none. Even my mother, to whom he was devoted, could hardly be thus described; she often admitted to us that he never told her his business affairs, nor did she know what he was actually doing "up there in his study with those books of his." She

[1] When my Suite was performed, one of the papers referred to me as a native of Liverpool. But the truth-loving Canon was not going to let this pass; he wrote a letter stating that he had baptized me at Christ Church, in Oxton, Birkenhead, where I was born.

knew they had " something to do with the New Testament and something to do with Greek," but that was all. Her own attitude towards my father I should describe as one of love, respect, and admiration *minus* complete understanding. She could not talk with him about his greatest interest in life, let alone share it, because it was not comprehensible to her. And apparently he did not mind this ; he was content tranquilly to work on, asking neither for sympathy nor appreciation. Even his brothers—he was the youngest of three—were ignorant of the true purport of his labours, try as they would to induce him to be communicative on the subject. Nor was I myself any more successful ; all he would tell me was that he had " got into a groove," and that in some ways it had been a mistake. When I once talked about it to Uncle George, he laughed and told me a story of a man who, like my father, had spent hours a day in his study working—no one knew why—at something—no one knew what ; and only after his death did his relations discover the truth : he was counting how many times the letter A appeared in the Old Testament. . . . I am, however, glad to say that my father's labours were not quite so unfructuous as that, though statistics apparently were connected with them ; but I must confess that even now, as his executor, I am not so very much the wiser ; and when in that capacity I sorted out his books, they were not only Greek to me in the literal sense, but in the metaphorical sense also. The article entitled " Henry Scott," written by the Rev. F. W. Howard, to whom he bequeathed a number of his books, will no doubt throw more light on the subject than I can hope to do. It is with this object in view that I reprint it here.

Henry Scott

By the Reverend F. W. Howard, M.A., B.D., Tutor in New Testament Language and Literature, Handsworth College, Birmingham.

" The prominence given to this name in the third edition of Dr Robertson's *Grammar of the Greek New Testament*, recalls the tribute which the late Dr J. H. Moulton paid to him in the second edition of his *Prolegomena* : ' My special thanks are due to Mr H. Scott, of Oxton, Birkenhead, who went over the index of texts and two or three complicated numerical computations in the body of the book, and sent me unsolicited some corrections and additions, for which the reader will add his gratitude to mine.'

" How largely Professors Moulton and Robertson were indebted to this modest student for his minute care in checking figures and compiling statistics may be gathered from the tables which Dr Robertson furnishes as an appendix to his third edition, duplicates of which had previously been sent to Dr Moulton for use in his Grammar.

" It was the privilege of the writer to know this remarkable man for some time by correspondence, and during the last year of his life in warm personal friendship. A short account of him may prove interesting to the readers of *The Expository Times*.

" Henry Scott was born not far from Wolverhampton in 1843. When seven years old he came to live at Oxton, then a village near to Birkenhead, and went to a private school of which the Rev. Dr Wall was master. He showed in his boyhood a great aptitude for Greek, but entered upon a business career and finally became the managing director of a well-known shipping firm in Liverpool. So great was his love of the Greek Testament that he regularly rose at five every morning, and put in some hours' study before business. The same zeal secured some time every evening for further

work in the same field. Although he had other interests, such as gardening and chess, he described himself as *homo unius libri*. The Greek Bible and especially the New Testament claimed nearly all his leisure hours. Beginning with Buttmann and with Moulton's Winer he worked his way through every verse of the New Testament and noted every grammatical peculiarity. As far back as the year 1885 he began and carried through a MS. Grammar of the Greek Testament in several large volumes. Long before Dr Moulton showed in his *Prolegomena* the need for a new Grammar based upon the later researches in comparative philology, Mr Scott had worked his way through Brugmann and Delbrück's *Grundriss der vergleichenden Grammatik der indogermanischen Sprachen*, applying the results to the problems of word-formation, accidence, and syntax in the Greek Testament. Although not a university man, and not a Greek scholar in the technical sense of the word, nothing seemed to escape his interest if it had any bearing upon his favourite study. While his son, Mr Cyril Scott, the well-known composer, was living in Germany for his musical training, Mr Scott visited that country and bought such books as Thumb's *Hellenismus*, then only just published and scarcely known to most British students. It is pretty safe to venture the statement that nowhere else in this country would it be possible to go into the study of an unprofessional layman and find such a library as his. *Kühner-Blass* and *Kühner-Gerth* were there, Hatzidakis' *Neugriechische Grammatik*, Hirt's *Handbuch der griechischen Laut und Formenlehre*, and many more. Nor were the less purely linguistic sides of N.T. study ignored. He was evidently in close touch with the best literature on the Synoptic Problem, and Von Soden's four large volumes on the text of the N.T. were conspicuous on his shelves. The remarkable thing is not so much that a Liverpool business man found time to study

such books, as that he applied himself to the bearing of all that he read upon the grammar of the Greek Testament. Every line on every page of Moulton, Radermacher, Thackeray, Blass, Robertson, to name no others, was carefully read and tested, and he probably had a minute index of every technical book he read. How highly Dr Robertson valued his assistance is indicated in a letter which says : ' Nobody has helped me as much as you. I am continually amazed at the wealth of your knowledge of the Greek N.T.' This is no slight praise from the author of the monumental Grammar. Yet so modest and reticent was this learned student that even his own vicar had no suspicion of his parishioner's interest in Greek until he visited him during that illness which ended fatally on June 20, 1919. A devout and loyal member of the Church of England, he found spiritual support in her services, but turned with continual eagerness to the written word. It was a deep disappointment to him that Professor Moulton delayed the completion of his *Grammar*. He mourned his loss with deep regret, and left all his own MS. notes on N.T. Greek to the editor of Moulton's *Grammar* to assist in its completion. Mr Henry Scott should ever be an inspiration to the unprofessional student of the Greek Bible."

It may be added that the vicar mentioned here is not Canon Robson to whom I have already referred, and who died at the age of eighty, or somewhere thereabouts, but his successor whom my father never knew very intimately. Furthermore, the statement that my father was a " devout and loyal member of the Church of England " requires a little qualification. He may have been so in one sense, but he used frequently to complain to me that the church service as it stood was far from satisfactory, and needed a great deal of modernising and " weeding out " ; moreover, as I have said, he was not at all in accord with many of its doctrines and dogmas. If he went to church, which he habitually

did on Sunday *evenings*, it was because he liked to participate in some form of worship, and not because he agreed with its tenets. On the contrary, he considered them antiquated and unsuited to the present generation; besides which, in his opinion, they were not altogether representative of the teachings of Christ. Indeed, towards the close of his life, far from deriving spiritual support from the Church of England, he turned to the writings of Mrs Besant and Mr Leadbeater, and particularly to an unorthodox book, anonymously published, called *Christ in You*. From this very mystical work he would ask my sister to read those passages he especially liked.

At the approach of his last days, that philosophical-mindedness which had characterised his entire life did not desert him. "As to the thought of death," he said to me, "it leaves me cold. I feel I am going on a very long journey, and that is all."

Paradoxical though it may sound, I attribute my father's fatal disease to his extraordinary health. Apart from a few colds he had scarcely known a day's illness, and consequently when he turned seventy—though he looked years younger—and felt no diminution in his physical powers, he did not see the necessity for "putting on the brake." Thus he continued to take long walks—usually before breakfast—to mow the lawn, which happened to be a sloping one, and to uproot trees which were getting so big as to interfere with the growth of his flowers. The result was that he injured his heart, and had to suffer agonising cardiac attacks, which eventually brought about his death.

I was not with him at the end; a concert engagement necessitated my being in Leeds the very day before he died. Prior to that he had been on the whole fairly well, but when he suddenly grew worse, he begged my mother not to "worry me" with any bad news until my concert was over, and she with

MARY SCOTT
AGED 47, DIED IN HER 80TH YEAR
THE AUTHOR'S MOTHER

reluctance did as he asked. When the telegram was handed to me, he had already passed away.

And indeed, in accordance with his own words, the thought of death *had* left him cold.

"You will find the papers about the grave in the safe," he said to my mother the night before he died.

"Don't talk about such things," she protested. But he only smiled in answer, and went on to say the funeral was to be as quiet as possible; he did not want to give any trouble to his acquaintances, so requested that there should be no flowers. Soon afterwards the nurse gave him an injection of morphia; he went to sleep, and—in this world—did not awake any more.

He was in his seventy-sixth year.

From the point of view of health, my mother was a strange contrast to her husband; she had ailed all her life, suffering from a weak chest and back. Her trouble was bronchial, giving rise to frequent bad coughs, especially when the weather was damp. She also suffered from insomnia, and very often did not sleep after two o'clock in the morning. Often as a child I remember having seen her lying on the couch, looking distressingly pale and tired, as if the weight of family cares were a burden too heavy for her delicate frame. But, fortunately, these are not my only memories; there *were* intervals of better health during which she radiated friendliness and cheerfulness on all those with whom she came into contact. Among her acquaintances and friends she was very popular, and her incessant labours for church bazaars and Sales of Work made her particularly so. She must have crocheted hundreds of miles of wool in her life, for she worked with astonishing rapidity, and was seldom to be seen without a half-finished shawl or doll's frock in her hands. There was always poor old Mrs So-and-so who needed something to keep her warm, or the Rev. So-and-so who needed a comforter. Of

sympathy she had a liberal abundance, especially for old people and clergymen. Where other women would have centred their admiration and solicitude on athletes, actors, or musicians, she centred hers on curates, and on her vicar, Canon Robson, in particular. I remember once teasing her with the remark: "Really, for a respectable married woman I think you allow your thoughts to stray far too often in the direction of the Canon" (as he was called) . . . at which she laughed apologetically, thinking I had made quite an excellent joke.

In my childhood I had been a source of much anxiety to her, not because I was unusually naughty, but because I was so delicate. The amount of medicine I must have swallowed was—one would have thought—enough to kill a child rather than cure it. One doctor after another was consulted, one place after another was tried, but with little result; into my consciousness had crept an unbearable sadness which nothing could dispel; I was tortured with a thousand meaningless anxieties.

And yet I did manage to derive a certain amount of solace from my piano, which I began to play by ear at one and a half years of age. My mother tells the story of an old lady whom I dimly remember, who gave vent to the prophetic utterance: "Now, mark my words, that child will be a great musician!" But seeing the number of piano-strumming children to which similar prophecies have been applied without fulfilment, too much importance cannot be attached to it. Though I have turned out a musician, I hardly feel justified in calling myself a *great* one. It is not exactly modesty from which I suffer, but a sense of humour; I neither take myself nor my works with great seriousness; and, I may add, for that very reason have caused a good deal of disappointment, especially to one or two American women. "Now, tell me, Mr Cyril Scott," they have said, "what you actually

felt or pictured to yourself when writing such-and-such a passage? We would *so* much like to have you tell us. What did you really mean?" But for answer I could only laugh and say: "I meant nothing except music itself." Their eager faces fell. "But *we* felt so and so. . . ." they protested, to which I could only bow and tell them they were luckier than *I*.

This capacity to treat myself with a grain of humour, however, only came to me after my twenty-fourth year; as a young boy, a youth, and a young man, I took myself and my works with a ridiculous seriousness. The first "piece" I managed, at the age of seven, to put on paper, constituted a momentous event, and I was mightily proud of my achievement. It is fortunate for me that my mother never "showed me off," or praised or accepted praise in connection with her own children: she was a laudably modest woman, and waived every compliment with a deprecating laugh. If she had been otherwise I might have grown up into a more arrogant young man than I actually did; for owing to my nerves I was never subjected to the correctives of a public school. My education, in fact, was another source of anxiety to my parents; they were puzzled as to what was the wisest thing to do for me, and solved the problem by engaging tutors, and later on sending me abroad. Thus I was sent one year to Brussels and another to a château near Rouen; of my visit to Germany I have already related.

After I left Liverpool, I would visit my parents once or twice a year at Oxton, but I also saw them from time to time in town on their way to winter in the south of France or England, my father having retired from business at a comparatively early age.

One winter while he was staying in a hotel, I think at Hastings, I sent him my latest volume of poems, which, it appears, he left on a table where it was "spotted" by one of his fellow-guests.

"Cyril Scott," said the latter reflectively; "let's see—he's the son of Clement Scott?"

"I think you're mistaken," said my father.

"Surely not. I was only told so the other day."

"I think you were misinformed."

"But it's a well-known thing," persisted the gentleman.

"Is it really?" mused my father; "now, that's most interesting. But I still think you're wrong."

"And I think *you* are wrong. Supposing we look him up in *Who's Who*, then we can be certain."

"It's not necessary." My parent was thoroughly enjoying himself.

"You seem to know a great deal about it!"

"Well, considering I'm his father myself . . ."

I do not know whether my mother was present to join in the joke, but if so, I can imagine her with rather flushed cheeks looking slightly anxious. Although she was normally pale, whenever she appeared among strangers she was apt to get a high colour. As a young woman—for she had been very beautiful—this added to her attractions, as an old woman it made her look younger. But she nevertheless disliked its concomitant symptoms, and was always so nervous for me, that only once did she attend a concert of mine—my first recital in Liverpool.

It is a fact known to physicians that when *some* ailing people turn seventy a great improvement may take place in their health: my mother was one of these. After her seventieth birthday she grew stronger in every way, and had fewer intervals of exhaustion. Indeed, with her brisk step and alert manner, she was a very young old woman, showing not a trace of impaired sight, hearing, or memory. Even after my father's death, in all her loneliness she managed to "keep going" by occupying herself in the house. Both my sister and I fervently wished she would take a companion, but we could not prevail upon her to

do so; neither could I entice her away from her friends and her church to come and live with me in London. Altogether her position was so sad that I could never think of her without a feeling of pain in my heart; and when after visiting her—as often as I could—the time came for saying good-bye, I had the greatest difficulty in not breaking down. Perhaps the happiest months since my father's death were those she spent at a hotel in Buxton prior to her own passing. "Everyone is so kind and attentive," she wrote, "I feel quite at home and most happy here." But, unfortunately, not long afterwards she felt she ought to return to her house to superintend the painting and decorating she decided to have done. Her return home proved disastrous; she caught a severe cold which turned to bronchial pneumonia. I received a letter from her, written in a very shaky hand, saying she had not felt so ill for a long time. Then two days afterwards my sister sent off a wire saying my mother would like to see me. When I arrived, I found her seriously ill with a nurse in attendance; but the doctor had hopes—her voice was strong and her pulse good. He spoke to her cheerfully about her wonderful constitution, nevertheless he thought a second opinion advisable. "These doctors are very kind," she told me, "but they do humbug one." A day or two later she said: "I'm quite resigned, whichever way it is . . ."; and then repeated a verse of Tennyson's "Crossing the Bar." As, however, the doctor did not anticipate any change for several days, we thought it best I should return to London to settle up some affairs, and then go back to Oxton. The morning before I left she took my hand and said: "Well, you've been a very good son to me." But truthfully I can say she had been a still better mother.

I did not see her again; she died while asleep the following night but one, in her eightieth year.

Since her death I have communicated with her

through one who can see " spirits " as easily as I can see the grosser human bodies.

" Well, mother," I said, " things are rather different over there from what you expected, aren't they ? "

" They are," she answered, " and in many ways much nicer."

" Do you remember when I got a message from father for you, you said to Mabel : ' I don't approve of Cyril's doing this at all—if people knew, they would think us very wicked ! ' "

Yes, she remembered.

" But apparently you don't disapprove *now* ! "

" No, it's so perfectly natural. I've learnt many things since coming over here."

" What sort of a life are you leading ? "

" I am seeing all my old friends at present," and she mentioned some of their names.

" And Canon Robson ? "

" Oh, of course, I have seen *him*."

Then she told me many details about my father's after-life activities, the narration of which I will reserve for *My Occult Life*, if I ever come to write it.

With the death of my parents, the family crest and several documents relating to ancestors came to light. It is curious that our motto should be : " *Do right and let them say*," because in my life that is on the whole the policy I have adopted. So long as I myself was satisfied that a course of action was not wrong, I have pursued it in spite of what others might think. That " the world " and I have sometimes differed, and that in consequence I have often been criticised and called many harsh names, I am fully aware ; but because convention holds a particular course of action to be correct, it by no means follows that it *is* intrinsically correct. In short, people *have said*, but what matter : it is not so much slander which harms a man, but his capacity to be annoyed by it. As to music, so long as I was

satisfied that a harmony or musical phrase was good, I never paid any attention to the protests of friends or critics. Though Shakespeare's admonition "*To thine own self be true*" has become a hackneyed one, it is none the less a sound maxim, and especially applicable to the creative artist.

Which reminds me that some element of the artistic must have been in the family for centuries, seeing that I possess the engraving of a Wassail Cup designed by my ancestor Richard Meir of Burslem, around 1580.

CHAPTER XIV

CHELSEA DAYS

After regretfully leaving Charles Bonnier, I returned to London for the latter part of the season, stayed with the Suarts for the last time, and assisted—curious expression—at a number of social functions. I remember that during one of these Miss Suart played my "Dagobah," and an eminent nerve specialist told her I was ruining the health of hundreds of people with my hideous music; but I fear this appalling assertion caused me merely to laugh and feel rather flattered, and come to the conclusion that many clever men were "awful fools." I realised, too, that similar doctrines had been promulgated, especially by elderly people, in connection with all the arts in nearly every epoch of history. The form they take simply depends on the profession or hobby of those who give utterance to them. The parson builds his dictum on religious grounds, the moral busy-body on moral grounds, the æsthete on grounds of taste. As old Madame Deffand wrote when time and change had left her in the rear-guard: "*J'ai eu autrefois des plaisirs indicibles aux opéras de Quinault*"—(I have never even heard of him)—"*et de Lulli et au jeu de Thévenart. . . . Pour aujourd'hui, tout me paraît detestable : acteurs, auteurs, musiciens, beaux esprits, philosophes, tout est de mauvais goût, tout est affreux, affreux. . . .*" Exactly—and that is why all young musicians love to be hated!

When the season came to an end, I packed myself off to Shere for the summer. . . . Often during train

journeys I made it a habit to practise deep breathing of a specific kind, or *prânayama*, as it is called in the Science of Yoga. On my way down to Shere I made a special effort in this direction, and was rewarded by experiencing one of those mystical states of consciousness to which I have already alluded in a previous chapter.[1] There were no exterior reasons why at that particular moment I should feel unusually calm and happy, and yet there came over me such a consciousness of ecstatic Peace, together with a feeling of unconditional Love, that even a dirty old man who got in at one of the stations appealed to me as something beautiful and lovable. I am aware that in relating this experience, all those who have never busied themselves with the study of higher states of consciousness will regard me as abnormal, or even perhaps a little mad ; but I may point out that madness implies an *absence* of control entirely antithetical to that wonderful calm I felt at the time and have often felt since. One would not say that the man who remained calm in very trying circumstances was mad or unbalanced : one would regard him as unusually sane and self-controlled. But, whereas that type of calm is of a negative order, the calm experienced by practitioners of Yoga is positive : it is peace *plus* the realisation of peace as a joyful and uplifting sensation. And its incalculable value lies therein that it depends for its existence on no externalities—no worldly pleasures, no worldly affections, no possessions. All religions worthy of the name point the way to its attainment, yet they do not *produce* it—they are the means but not the cause.

That summer I was to have the scintillating companionship of an old Frankfurt friend, Miss Jenny C. Hill, whom I had often visited in Birkdale, near Southport, where she had lived for some years. Having held out the charms of Shere and the Marriott-Watsons as

[1] See Chapter IX.

a bait, I not only induced her to come herself, but to bring a friend with her. This friend, although not beautiful, possessed an irresistible pair of eyes ; also, she was interested in things spiritual, and this combination proved too much for my inflammable heart. . . . Thus Shere became the scene for me of another romance, and one of which it might almost be said that the heart was caught on the rebound. For, if the truth be confessed, I had recently experienced one of those mortifying affairs based entirely on a misconception. I had grown fond of a young woman, only to discover that she was of quite a different calibre from what I had imagined. We had even gone so far as to be unofficially engaged, for in those days convention demanded that two people who were seen about together so much should at least have an " understanding," as it was called. But as time went on, and the incompatibility of temperament between us became more and more evident, there seemed for both our sakes only one of two courses to pursue : either to remain friends without any *arrière pensée*, or to part. In the end the latter course was adopted—not because I alone wished it, but because *she* did. That we both soon recovered from our disappointment was shown by the fact that she made a happy marriage not long afterwards, and I—well, as I have said, spent a romantic summer at Shere.

With the approach of autumn I went to stay with friends for a few weeks, and then took furnished rooms in town, so that I might look about for a more permanent domicile. After much scanning of advertisement columns, I finally discovered two rooms in King's Road, Chelsea, which I took, and, having taken them, wrote to my father to ask him to despatch my belongings from Liverpool.

Thus on a sunny autumn morning a cart containing some very peculiar-looking furniture drove up in front of a terrace facing the top of Oakley Street and

was unloaded, much to the amusement of a few onlookers, by the driver and an elderly loafer, and carried up the narrow stairs to my rooms. Among this furniture was a very old stained-glass window which I had bought in Paris, and a wooden contraption which looked like a cross between a confessional box and choir stalls. Indeed, my mother had often stood in front of this piece of furniture and laughed in that manner expressive of pity for one who, in her estimation, obviously had a screw loose *somewhere*. Still, I had my revenge on her, for whenever I went to stay at her house in Oxton I would spend a large part of my time by the kitchen fireside. "Why on earth do you sit in the kitchen?" she would ask. "Because it's the only poetical room in the house," I would reply; "it's like being in a cottage in the country." And this because the parental furniture, although very "good," was correspondingly large and mid-Victorian, and produced an atmosphere not at all to my liking.

The selection of King's Road, Chelsea, as a place of habitation was, I grant, a rather peculiar one, but then I hoped that the continuous rumble of traffic would drown my bugbear, the noise of barrel-organs; besides which, its proximity to the houses of various friends, the Robin Legges, Mr and Mrs Austin Harris, the Lowry Salon and others, had its distinct advantages. Also, as the remainder of the house was occupied by a tax-collector, a dressmaker, and an elderly spinster who did *not* possess a piano, I was safe from musical disturbances. As it so happened, this spinster afforded a psychological problem worthy, if not of study, at any rate of mention. She entertained so pronounced an adoration for Miss Ellen Terry, who, I discovered, lived very nearly opposite, that, as I also discovered, she had made it a habit to follow that celebrated actress from one dwelling-place to another, and to establish herself in rooms as close to her as possible. This adoring spinster would spend a great

part of her time at the window or on her balcony waiting for Miss Ellen Terry to drive out, when she would wave her hand or handkerchief, and receive a nod or wave in return. Unfortunately for her, and also for me, she did not confine her violent likes to such eminent personages as Miss Terry, but formed a very ardent friendship with a species of charwoman who, in return for her kindness, disburdened her of most of her trinkets, and incidentally *me* of several pairs of trousers. Nor could she be brought to believe in the guilt of this woman, and had not discharged her when I myself quitted these rooms for an upper part in Bayswater. But of course, prior to that, I took good care to keep my doors locked, and so protect myself against further dishonest invasions.

During my stay in Chelsea I gave my first chamber concert at the then Bechstein Hall. Miss Edith Clegg kindly sang for me, also Mr Frederic Austin. The programme included the sextet which had had such a mixed reception at Miss Suart's party, and also some piano pieces which I played myself. Owing to the fact that all my friends rallied round me, not to mention the exertions on my behalf of Mr Elkin and Mr A. K. Pearson, the manager of the hall, my concert was a financial success. Indeed, on the strength of it, I gave recitals several years in succession, and with the same result; but as they afforded no amusing incidents I do not intend to expatiate upon them.

Having established myself in London, I came to realise that Mrs Grainger's unselfish ambitions for me had not relaxed. On her "at home" days she invited me to meet this, that, and the other music-lover, in the hopes that some advantage to me might accrue as the result. But the dear, kind woman's zeal was so great, that no sooner had I sat down to talk to one person, than she whisked me away to be introduced to somebody else; thus, although I conversed with many, I got to *know* very few. I have to

thank her nevertheless for some very valuable friendships made later on.

Percy Grainger and I used occasionally to visit Countess Bective at her house in Belgravia. I have seldom seen a more stately and beautiful member of the English aristocracy than this white-haired old lady. One day we were invited to meet Miss Wakefield, well known for her musical activities in the north-western counties. She was, in striking contrast to our hostess, extremely rotund and alarmingly purple in the face. I had been requested to bring some songs to show her, and had placed among them "April Love," which she proceeded to read from sight; but her eyes being defective and her voice distinctly *passé*, the effect was more humorous than edifying. Even so, I think we should have succeeded in keeping our faces had she not made such a travesty of the words, but really when instead of the poetical sentiment:

> "We have walked in Love's land a little way,
> We have learnt his lesson a little while,"

she sang: "We have learnt his lesson in cattle white," it made too great a demand upon our self-control, and I saw Grainger rush to the other side of the room, and with shaking shoulders examine very closely a masterpiece that hung upon the wall. For my own part, I was forced to take refuge in a fit of coughing.

But in spite of her unwillingness, vocally speaking, to grow old, Miss Wakefield was very popular with her friends, and, I believe, did much in her day for music in England. She died not long after this, and considering what must have been the height of her blood-pressure, I am not surprised.

On other occasions at Lady Bective's I met Miss Marie Tempest, Mr Robert Hichens, and Mr Victor Beigel, who entertained us with his inimitable singing of Viennese popular songs. Lady Bective was exceedingly good to me—and indeed to many young musicians

—and always made a point of taking tickets for my concerts, even when unable to go to them.

About that time I made the acquaintance of a young Brahmin named Vaman Shankar Rao Pandit ; Ernest Thesiger had brought him one day to Mrs Robin Legge's. As my interest in Indian philosophy was so keen, and I had hopes of conversing with him on the subject, I was not slow to cultivate this really charming boy. I call him a boy, but as a matter of fact he was twenty-one, and in bearing and knowledge seemed much beyond his years. He was the first Indian I had met, and he impressed me greatly by the beauty of his face, which was olive and not black, and by his general culture and refinement. He had come to England with two objects—to study for the Bar and to study art, and for that purpose he had rented a small studio and bedroom off the King's Road. One of the first things he did after our meeting was to make a drawing of me, which, I remember, required a vast number of sittings, and when finished made me look more like an Indian than an Englishman. Still, I enjoyed those sittings, as they gave me an excuse to discuss my pet subject. This young man had known my idol Swami Vivekananda, and told me many interesting details about his life and character.

Rao Pandit as a rule wore European dress, but occasionally he appeared at evening parties in turban and robes. He considered English society astonishingly frivolous. " It is such a pity," he confided to me, " that nearly all social gatherings end in buffoonery ; in India we discuss philosophy."

But he was far from being a prig, and was never averse to a good joke. His friend, Arild Rosencranz,[1] whom I met at his studio, teased him incessantly, and the by-play between them was a continuous entertainment. Rosencranz regarded him as a curiosity,

[1] He painted a picture called the " Omnipresent," reproductions of which are to be seen in most picture shops.

and would recount to me some of his more amusing *faux pas*. It appears that one evening he turned up unexpectedly just as R. and his wife were about to have dinner. " Do stay if you can," said R., " but I'm afraid you won't find much to eat."

" Oh, that doesn't matter," replied Rao Pandit, " I'll eat what there is, and if I still feel hungry I can find something at my studio when I get home."

" This was not rudeness," commented Rosencranz, " it was merely his disconcerting truthfulness."

A so-called Mahatma had arrived in London, and had announced himself ready to receive any visitors who cared to partake of his pearls of wisdom. I had gone to see this man with a Swedenborgian violinist friend of mine, but had been treated in a very off-hand manner, so I asked Rao Pandit to come with me and give *his* impressions. The " Mahatma " was a most repulsive-looking personage covered with small-pox marks, and addicted to the habit of taking snuff. At the interview Pandit spoke to him in his own vernacular, and told him I was a musician who had a passion for Indian philosophy.

" In our country, a musician counts for nothing,"[1] was his benevolent answer.

" But it is different here," objected Rao Pandit.

" I am not interested," said the Mahatma with a shrug.

They talked for some time on other matters, and then we came away. When we got outside, my friend laughed and told me the man had used the most obscene language, and was a regular adept at swearing. " If you ask me," he said, " the fellow is simply out to make an impression on titled people for political purposes."

Soon afterwards he was imprisoned for rape : but as his behaviour in gaol nonplussed the authorities—he would stop his heart-beat,[2] and then when thought to

[1] This is apparently incorrect. See Chapter XVII.

[2] This is one of the " stunts " of Hatha Yogis, and Fakirs.

be dead would burst out laughing—they finally deported him instead.

But the full significance of this story will only be patent to those who understand the attributes of a genuine Mahatma. Literally the term means Great Soul, and is only applicable to persons of irreproachable character and wisdom-fraught saintliness. I have spoken with such an one, and his benignity, compassion and tolerance bore a striking contrast to the disgraceful behaviour of the agitator we visited in London.

Rao Pandit passed his exams. successfully, and when I last saw him he was going through that curious process known to barristers as "eating his dinners"; after the termination of which he returned to India, and I have not heard of him since.

On Sunday evenings I used often to go round to Mr and Mrs Norman O'Neill's, where there would be a little gathering of old Frankfurters, including Mr Arnold Jones (to whom I am indebted for the photograph of Iwan Knorr) Clemens von Franckenstein, who was then conductor of the Moody-Manners Opera Company, and other old friends. Mrs O'Neill has been for many years the principal piano teacher at St Paul's Girls' School, Hammersmith. She was a pupil of Madame Schumann's, and considering her pianistic talents it is regrettable that she does not more frequently find time to play in public. From my very earliest days she has courageously and generously championed my cause, and made a point of introducing my piano pieces whenever opportunity offered. This being so, her indignation—which is always picturesque—was aroused one day in connection with a lecture she herself had organised at her school on British Composers for the Piano. The lecturer, after starting with Field, expatiated on a number of modern composers, but omitted any mention of my own name.

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This was too much for Mrs O'Neill's enthusiastic temperament; so at the end she arose and said to the lecturer: "But surely you have forgotten the most pianistic and prolific of all our British composers—I mean Cyril Scott."

"I have not *forgotten* him," the lecturer replied, "and am fully aware of his talent; but I consider his music of too unhealthy a nature to be suited to young girls—it is like giving them Oscar Wilde to read."

I do not know whether to regard this extraordinary interpretation of my quite mild and inoffensive piano pieces as a compliment or otherwise. At any rate, Mrs O'Neill did not agree with it, and said so.

During my residence in King's Road I attempted to form a Vedanta Society in London. Swami Abhedananda, the successor in New York of Swami Vivekananda, had come over on a visit to England, and no sooner did I learn this than I took steps to make his acquaintance. He presented an imposing spectacle in his long terra-cotta robe, as he sat surrounded by a number of questioners, that evening I visited him at his hotel. In fact, I was so impressed that I determined to do my utmost to facilitate his remaining in London more or less permanently as a teacher of Vedanta philosophy, and to this end succeeded in interesting my friend H. D. Harben and several others. Among these was Mrs Saxton Noble—well known in London society—who, having become enthusiastic over Swami Vivekananda's writings and the message they contained, helped me very considerably in carrying out my project. Mrs Alfred, now Lady, Mond also indirectly assisted by lending her drawing-room for a lecture; so that altogether I had hopes that there might be enough people to establish a Vedanta Society on as solid a basis in London as it was then established in New York. But in this I was ultimately to be disappointed; the Society existed for about a year,

after which it came to an abrupt end, leaving a deficit of £30 which the unfortunate chairman, Mr H. D. Harben, and the treasurer, Mr Urwick, paid out of their own pockets. In other words, we could not collect enough members to maintain the Swami over here, in spite of all our efforts and especially those of his friend, Miss Alice Bowles, who acted as honorary secretary, and had fought for the Vedantic cause ever since the days of Vivekananda. For the Swami with all his intellect was somewhat lacking in *savoir faire*, and would unintentionally " put people's backs up " by rating them for their lack of enthusiasm ; also, being ignorant of London, he would alight after a journey at the most expensive hotel in town, and then be greatly perturbed at the length of the bill which, not unnaturally, gave some cause for alarm to the Society's treasurer. At last, to save expenses, he shared a furnished flat with an American lady, and was much surprised to hear that the committee did not altogether approve of this arrangement ; although *they* knew there was " nothing wrong in it," they feared the members might consider it rather too unconventional for a teacher of religion.

Yet even if the Swami was unfortunate in conducting his worldly affairs, his wisdom in the affairs of the spirit was considerable, and he could hold an audience deeply interested for seventy minutes by his eloquence, even though speaking in—for him—a foreign language. As Harben said to me : " In spite of his trifling drawbacks, I consider him the most intellectual man I have ever met." Personally, however, I found him much more than intellectual, for, as he stayed with me for a month at Shere, I got to know him fairly well ; he had a very large and loving heart, and was a man of deep spiritual ideals, as his writings show.

I think, nevertheless, that the forming of societies is not one of my talents, so do not anticipate making any further efforts along that line of endeavour.

CHAPTER XV

EXPERIENCES WITH THE THEATRICAL WORLD

UNLESS my memory is at fault, it was during the Chelsea days that I met Francis Korbay, known for his arrangements of Hungarian songs. He was a well-groomed, rather sentimental old gentleman, with a short, pointed, white beard, a broad, expanded chest, and a ceremonious manner. For reasons best known to himself he took rather a liking to me, and, with reservations, also to my music, and would often invite me to dine with him at his club, and then to play my compositions to him afterwards. In his younger days he had been an operatic singer of some note, but when I knew him he gave singing-lessons. I believe Plunket Greene was one of his pupils—in fact, his *star* pupil. Nowadays, when sometimes I mention "dear old Korbay," as I used to think of him, people say: "Oh, yes, he was Liszt's son, wasn't he?" But if this be true, and I am in no position to express an opinion, he himself did not own to it, but always alluded to the great lady-killing virtuoso-composer as his godfather. . . . And I have seldom heard any man talk in such rhapsodies of adoration and boundless enthusiasm as those in which Korbay talked of Liszt: never had there existed such a wonderful being—such a godlike artist—such a selfless character—such an almost divine mortal; but then, as Korbay was habitually a dealer in superlatives, one must not take these extravagances *too* seriously. Did not the old man after an illness once exclaim to me: "Yes, those dear angels

Miss S. and Miss T. literally vied with one another to tend me in my extremity. . . . "

But this eulogist could also at times act an antithetical part, and prove rather tiresome where his dislikes were concerned, as I discovered through his friend John Sargent. It appears that one of Korbay's dislikes was Gabriel Fauré. Now Sargent greatly admired Fauré, and as he had arranged with a French singer to sing some of my songs at the house of old Mr Wertheimer, the well-known art connoisseur, he asked me if I would accept a rather unusual engagement and accompany them. " But," he added, " don't mention this to Korbay, because he is so very annoying and ridiculous about Fauré." Whether there was more in all this than met the eye, I cannot say ; in any case, to entertain a passionate hatred for the tuneful and harmless Fauré, who never wrote a discord in his life, seemed incredible. One might as well hate Schumann.

Korbay's admiration for Sargent was profound, and the least word of appreciation from him filled the old man with ecstatic pride. " Sargent liked *that* passage," he said to me while playing over an overture he had just completed ; and certainly Sargent had hit upon the only untedious bit in the whole piece. . . . Yet Francis Korbay appreciated a little " pepper and salt " in other people's compositions, and was at one time enthusiastic over some of my harmonies. But " modernity," to please him, had to be administered in small doses ; when he heard the sextet performed at my recital, after three movements he rose from his seat, murmured in an audible voice that he could stand no more of these discords, and stalked out of the hall. . . . It is well for him that he got safely to Heaven before Stravinsky and Schönberg appeared upon the musical *tapis*.

At one time my friend Mrs H. D. Harben took lessons from him, and on a certain occasion when she

was merely passing through London, and thought she would fit in a lesson between two train journeys, arrived at his house in a taxi piled with luggage. "Thank God it is only you!" exclaimed Korbay, clutching the region of his heart. "I am always terrified when a cab with luggage drives up to my door." Mrs Harben naturally showed surprise and told him how sorry she was to have inadvertently upset him. "I thought my wife had come back," he confided. "Really! I never knew you had a wife," said Mrs Harben. "Alas, yes," was the answer, "but we are separated. . . ." Mrs Harben thought it wise not to solicit any further information.

Korbay died, I believe, very suddenly of phlebitis not long before the war. Unfortunately, his attractive and devoted ward Miss Susan Strong was not with him at the last. Thus this courtly and picturesque old gentleman ceased to decorate the musical drawing-rooms of London.

My associations with the theatrical world began, strictly speaking, while staying with Miss Suart, when Mr Oscar Asche, whom I met at her flat, told me he was debating in his mind whether he should engage me or Mr Franco Leoni to write some incidental music for a new production of his. In fact, though I had forgotten the incident myself, I much amused Mrs Suart, and at the same time contrived to give Mr Asche a rather bad impression of myself by asking: "And who is Franco Leoni . . . ?" Yet my question, if tactless, was quite sincere; I had, unfortunately for me, never heard of him. Whether my ill-chosen remark was responsible for my not getting the "job," I cannot say; at all events negotiations ceased, though without any unpleasantness on either side. . . . My next but equally abortive transaction was with Mrs Patrick Campbell, for whom Mr Arthur Symons had designed the leading part in his adaptation of *Electra*,

a work he had just completed. Mrs Campbell, at his suggestion, approached me with the view to my writing an overture and some incidental music. This I was quite willing to do, but knowing the ways of the profession, and the uncertainties of theatrical production, I foresaw that I might spend much time and energy in composing music without in the end obtaining a performance. Mrs Campbell had asked me my terms, and I had written naming a certain sum ; but to this she would not agree, and instead proposed half the amount to be paid when the overture was delivered, and the remainder after so many performances. I answered politely that as I had no guarantee that the piece would run to so many performances, her proposal did not suit me, and would she therefore kindly reconsider the matter. Then Mrs Campbell began to exhibit some of her dramatic temperament ; she dashed off a letter which was fiery, to say the least, and informed me—as far as I could gather, for it was mostly illegible—that I ought to be delighted to have the opportunity of writing the music at all, and certainly not make such stipulations about terms. Once again I wrote back ; but this time I said : " As I cannot accept your terms, and as I *am* glad to have the opportunity to write this overture, I shall be delighted if you will accept it from me for nothing." The result was unexpected : Mrs Campbell scribbled off a regular " snorter," and told me I was far too young to adopt such an outrageously high-handed tone—I ought to learn better manners—get rid of some of my conceit—and much more to the same effect. All the same my intuition was proved correct ; not only did *Electra* fail to run the calculated number of performances : it was never put on at all. . . . Shortly after these one-sided hostilities, I met Mrs Campbell at a party. " Now really, Mrs Pat," I said laughingly, as I went up to her, " you mustn't be offended with me, I did not in the least intend to——"

" Get out of my sight, horrid young man," she exclaimed, theatrically waving me away, much to the surprised amusement of the other guests.

It would almost seem that the fates frown disapprovingly at any connection of mine with the stage. When many years later Mr Matheson Lang requested me to write some " subtle and atmospheric " music to *Othello*, it was so " subtle and atmospheric " as to be inaudible above the buzz of conversation in which theatre-goers indulge during the *entr'actes*. Indeed, to suit the requirements of such people, it is evident that theatrical music should be *heard* but not listened to ! " I went specially for your music," Mr Edwin Evans said to me after the first performance, " but for all the impression I got I might as well have stayed at home."

" Still, the orchestra hears it," I said, " and that is something."

I do not know if all composers of incidental music have the same experiences as I had, but if so, I offer them my sympathy. I was told to be at the theatre at twelve o'clock for an orchestral rehearsal. I arrived as requested only to witness a dress rehearsal of *Othello* itself, which was very interesting for the first two hours, but after that became wearisome, causing me to grow hungry and tired. Tea-time arrived and still I waited to coach my orchestra ; two more hours went by, and then I was told that the performance would have to take place without any further rehearsal—there was no time left.

But such *contretemps* are of minor importance : even more distressing ones lie in wait for the unwary composer. He signs a contract stipulating for a certain number of instruments and their players : then after the first or second performance, the conductor tells him with a wry face that the management, wishing to curtail expenses, insists on reducing the orchestra. First, the harp is withdrawn, and all scintillating effects with it ; then the flute with its

pastoral atmosphere; then one or two violins. . . . What is to be done? Put up with this travesty of one's original work, or go to Law? And this is not all: even the composition itself has been previously mishandled by the management—a piece cut out here and another cut out there, and a third stuck in a place where it does not belong. Could anything be more trying to a composer's self-respect? No wonder he comes to hope that the play will not have a protracted run, so that his reputation may not be damaged beyond all repair.

All the same, so far the fates had merely frowned on my theatrical enterprises; henceforth they were to use stronger measures. . . . I wrote my opera, *The Alchemist*, in 1918, and showed it shortly afterwards to Sir Thomas Beecham, who promised to perform it at Covent Garden, and then went bankrupt. In 1920–1921 my publishers in Mainz set about its engraving, and also notified one or two operatic managers in Germany of its existence by forwarding the scenario. This seemed to excite such interest that the Frankfurt, Mannheim, and Wiesbaden opera-houses were all anxious to have the *première*, and with that end in view I was asked to play the score to the directors of all three, which I did on my way back from Vienna in 1922. My publisher finally decided on Wiesbaden for the first performance; the work was translated into German, and everything got in readiness, when—the opera-house was burnt down!

To return to the Chelsea days. Although I had my *pied-à-terre* in the King's Road, I was constantly running out of town for week-ends, some of which, especially those spent with Gervase Elwes, were enjoyable, others less so, for I was on occasions the fish very much out of water. I recollect passing one extremely uncomfortable week-end in the company of Sir John Cowans, who indulged in a species of horse-

play with his hostess which offended my then hypersensitive nature.

In those days Mr H. G. Wells lived at Sandgate, near Folkestone, and as I had been staying in the latter place with some friends and had walked over to see him one afternoon, he asked me to spend a few days with him at Spade House, as it was called, before I returned to London. I had been very much impressed by the views set forth in his book—not so well known as some of the others, I think—called *In the Days of the Comet*; for here were to be found those self-same conjugal ethics which Mrs Stevenson had only a short while back instilled into me at Ambleteuse. I remember delivering quite a panegyric on this book as he and I took a long and chilly walk by the sea-front.

At that time Mr Wells had not discovered the mystical emotions which later on were to inspire him to write *God, the Invisible King*; but as I myself had, as it were, forestalled him in this respect, though I may have called my *Invisible King* by a Sanscrit name, I could not refrain from a little polemical enjoyment with so formidable an opponent. It was like playing a very difficult yet very friendly game of chess which must end in a draw; for H. G., with all his scientific knowledge, is so amiable and tentative a speaker, that although he may not agree with one, he never allows one to feel he has got the best of it—a most admirable quality, showing an inherent gentleness of heart.

I discovered that his methods of work were rather unusual; I understood him to say he worked at any odd times of the day, especially when dressing in the morning. To my amusement I also discovered that he kept a typist in a little hut in the garden, whom he would visit from time to time with fresh batches of manuscripts, the whole arrangement rather suggesting a caged animal that had to be fed with buns. . . . His recreations at the moment were Badminton and Beethoven—the latter he used to play with much

enthusiasm on the pianola. "I expect you don't altogether approve of this," he said to me, "but I get quite a lot of enjoyment out of it." I hastened to tell him that composers were not so averse to mechanical instruments as might be supposed; in fact there are one or two Chopin Études which sound entrancing on the pianola, though I cannot say as much for Beethoven!

When I first met H. G. Wells he was already scaling the topmost branches of the symbolical tree, but when I first met Thomas Beecham—which I did around that time—he was quite unknown. Yet even then he had musical schemes, though I have forgotten of what nature, upon which he would audibly soliloquise as, with body bent forward and arms on knees, he stared at the carpet. I have lived to see changes in many men, but seldom have I seen such a radical change as that which took place in Thomas Beecham during the space of five years. Out of that shy, groundward-glancing little figure in a frock coat, brown boots, pork-pie hat, and dark woollen gloves (with a pattern) there emerged a personality of such force and magnetism that the whole of musical England was to feel its grandiose effects. And it was society, together with the influence and energy of that remarkable woman Lady Cunard, which so materially assisted in producing this transformation—society *made* Beecham as completely as it has marred artists of a different calibre. The man who at one time had apparently been content with woollen gloves, sniffed at a proffered allowance from his father of £50,000 a year. "Such a sum," he said, "is no use to me at all."

There are those who criticised Sir Thomas Beecham's conducting on the grounds that it contained too much of the "monkey on the stick" element; but with such people I cannot agree. For the orchestra to be exerting itself to the utmost, and for the conductor to be taking

things easy, suggests to my mind a rather enervating incongruity which detracts from my pleasure. It seems to me the business of a conductor is not only to energise the orchestra, but also the audience, which in any case is only too prone to go to sleep. Moreover, I cannot agree that Beecham's movements were lacking in dignity—he neither balanced himself on tip-toe like a *danseuse*, nor fluttered over his desk like a large bat ; he stood for the most part erect, and his conducting was expressive of the music he was drawing forth. It is true that, if a great conductor, he was an unequal one, for his artistic temperament, rather than proving an assistance to him, often stood in his way ; thus when he had to conduct works which did not specially interest him, he took very little trouble at the rehearsals and perhaps even at the performance. There is a story of how he was one day rehearsing a Beethoven Symphony, which obviously bored him to so great an extent that his mind wandered and the orchestra in consequence got out of hand. " Good God," he said, wearily stroking his hair, " surely you know *this* old work ? " " Yes, *we* do . . .," came the answer from one of the players.

Thomas Beecham did not believe in the subsidising of musical enterprise by the State or the Municipality. " For heaven's sake, let County Councillors keep their fingers out of all artistic pies," was one of his sentiments. And when he delivered a speech at the British Music Society Banquet one year, I heard him say as he thumped the table : " Look at the Municipal Buildings in Leeds. Could anything be more hideous and horrifying to our sense of taste ? If that is the result in the domain of architecture, what *would* it be in the domain of music ? "

Exactly—but one can at least keep away from bad concerts, whereas ugly buildings, monuments, and drinking-fountains are practically unavoidable sights, except to the blind.

Another of Sir Thomas Beecham's doctrines is that music, which began as an art, has degenerated into a public nuisance, a fact which must be palpable to everyone. In this respect the poet is certainly better off; he does not have, say, Wordsworth, Longfellow, or worse still, Ella Wheeler Wilcox shouted at him from every street corner or recited to him *during* his dinner at restaurants and *after* his dinner at social functions. But on this subject I shall have something to say later when I come to relate my adventures in Queen's Road.

I have to thank Sir Thomas Beecham for the first performance of my Piano Concerto at the beginning of the war, and also for the first performance of my Two Passacaglias for orchestra, which—strange coincidence—he conducted on the night when 80,000 Germans were supposed to have landed in Kent. That evening I dined with H. D. Harben and his wife at the Bath Club, where I found little groups of people standing in the hall and talking with very woe-begone faces. It was not the happiest of circumstances in which to attend a first performance, but Beecham himself showed no signs of perturbation—he never does—he is perhaps the most controlled artist in the whole of the artistic arena. Indeed, I will go further: taking him all round, he is an absolutely unique figure in the entire history of music.

Musicians are not always successful in keeping out of the divorce court, but few of them enter those unsacred precincts for the same reason as I did. While still in Liverpool I received a letter from a member of the University Club, asking me if I had taken part in certain disgraceful goings-on in that building—he did not supply any details—and if so, he was ready to give me the usual satisfaction. But as I wrote back saying I really hadn't the faintest idea to what he alluded, and therefore did not demand the proffered

satisfaction, the matter dropped as far as I was concerned. I had, in fact, almost forgotten the incident, when about two years later a solicitor called on me one evening in King's Road.

" I understand," he said, " that you received a letter some while ago challenging you to a duel ? "

I assented.

" Well—I didn't wish to subpœna you, but we want you to come and swear to it in the witness-box." He then went on to explain that the writer of the letter had been certified insane, but prior to that had got married, and his wife was now attempting to obtain an annulment on the grounds that he was already out of his mind when the marriage took place.

Fortunately in the end the annulment was granted : for in view of what I heard afterwards, there could be no doubt the man had persecution mania. Even while driving from the church he told his bride that the cab was being followed ; and when, having put her head out of the window to look, she denied it, he declared : " But they are on the roof ! " After which she had realised the full horror of her predicament. . . .

My Chelsea days were drawing to their close, but before I moved to another part of London I was to experience a love-affair of a particularly distressing nature. I became infatuated with a very noble but very unhappy woman, whose sufferings, though I alleviated them to some extent, I was totally unable to cure. Thus I became racked with a compassion almost unendurable in its intensity, and culminating in something closely resembling a nervous breakdown. This infatuation, the longest I have ever experienced, lasted two years, then subsided into a close friendship which has endured up till the present time.

CHAPTER XVI

CHIROPODY AND VOCALISTS

I FORGET how I came to know Mrs Lina Rowan Hamilton, but it was during the Chelsea days that I formed a very close friendship with her. Mrs Hamilton is—I can still talk of her in the present—a woman of deep spiritual insight, and I owe her much for the spiritualising effect her friendship had upon me at that now rather far-off time. It was at her house that I met Mr Bradshaw Isherwood of Marple Hall, Cheshire, with whom I eventually decided to join forces and share an upper part in Queen's Road, Bayswater. There was only one menace to the harmony of our *ménage*, and that—as I discovered all too soon—was the abominable sound of barrel-organs. I would be, perhaps, in the middle of a composition, with ideas flowing moderately well, when suddenly—"The Honeysuckle and the Bee," or the Intermezzo from *Cavalleria*! And it was not only irksome but useless to descend two flights of stairs and shout and gesticulate, for the barrel-organist merely wheeled his instrument of torture a few yards down the street, to render its tinkling a little less audible but still sufficiently so to prevent me from carrying on my work for at least another ten minutes. As we had signed a three years' agreement for our rooms, something drastic had to be done to keep me—my friend was at Somerset House all day—out of the lunatic asylum. Fortunately several bank-clerks, tradespeople, and other persons carrying on business in Queen's Road were becoming as exasperated as myself, and steps were taken to put a stop

to the nuisance. A meeting was called and a resolution passed that an association be formed, called, if I remember rightly, "The Queen's Road Protection Association," in which each member should subscribe a modest sum to the maintenance of a commissionaire to patrol the road in question, and turn away any barrel-organists, penny-whistlers, harmonium-players, cornet-blowers, and other ungodly noise-producers, who make London streets places of torment to everybody who is not deaf. . . . And for a while all went well; then it was discovered that the commissionaire was not severe enough, so another of a more awe-inspiring type had to be engaged. But even then, after about two years, the scheme was, or had to be, abandoned, and Queen's Road once again became a musician's hell, from which the only musician who was foolish enough to try to live there had to flee.

Since the war things are ten times worse; though the whistling for taxis has been prohibited, the penny-whistling, brass-band-blowing, barrel-organ-playing, etc., etc., have increased in some districts immeasurably. And what can one do—tip the policeman on the beat, who is very polite, full of sympathy, promises to do what he *can*, but is afraid, as the law stands, he can do very little? And very little *is* done. When in Marylebone, I think, some attempt was recently made to pass a by-law putting down street-cries, the authorities decided that to do so would be to interfere with the liberty of the subject. Yet if this be the case, how is it that a "Bobby" can "move on" a harmless pair of canoodlers in my street, as I have often seen him do, without interfering with their liberty? The answer is that either he *is* permitted to interfere with it, or else is taking the law into his own hands. One evening during the very hot weather I sat by my open window pretty late into the night, dreamily looking at the few passers-by. A little way along the road stood a loving

couple talking and occasionally embracing one another. Once the policeman strolled by and said nothing ; the second time he told them to " move on." And I asked myself why ? There was no traffic in the street, so they were not obstructing it ; their demonstrations were within the limits of decorum, so they were not guilty of indecent behaviour ; they were obviously sober, so could not be accused of drunken disorderliness ; they were making no noise, so no one could say they were disturbing the peace : nevertheless they were " moved on," and their liberty was interfered with. But on what grounds ? If there is a law by which people may *walk* along the street, but are not permitted to *stand* in it—well and good ; but in that case, why may a person break that law so long as he holds two boxes of matches in his hand, causes one discomfort by the pitiful face he pulls, or, infinitely worse, if he jerks the bellows of a concertina in and out, or makes passers-by feel seasick by his nauseating *portamenti* on a fiddle-string attached to a cigar-box ? In short, if a man makes himself a thorough nuisance to others, we are not allowed to interfere with his liberty ; but if he does *not*, we move him on. As a doctor said to me the other day : " There is no discomfort greater than noise," and I agree with him. At seven o'clock in the morning I am awakened by the cries of the milkman, which are particularly annoying after a short or a bad night's rest ; then follow the raucous cries of a series of coal vendors, gas coke vendors, vegetable vendors, plant vendors, fruit vendors, sweet lavender vendors, rag-and-bone men, old bottle buyers, old iron buyers, and hosts of others I have for the moment forgotten. When I first took my house, some twelve years ago, my little street, suggestive with its trees and gardens of a village lane, was absolutely quiet ; since the war, although rents have gone up over fifty per cent., and hence the neighbourhood cannot be said to have gone down, owing to that interminable succession

of cries, it has become reminiscent of the slums; and so, moreover, have streets containing large and fine houses with correspondingly large but less "fine" rents. The awkward part is that I have not only bought the house, but also the adjoining one, into which I have made two doorways; in addition, I have had most of the rooms panelled and central heating put in. Yet I foresee that unless something miraculous happens to strike all street-criers dumb, or, better still, legislators come at last to realise that one man's freedom is another man's bondage, and hence make a judicious compromise, I shall be compelled to flee from my present abode as I fled from the last. All the same, when my friends visit me in the *evening* they say: "What a delightful place you live in, and *how quiet*—not a sound—one might be miles away from anywhere." "You should come in the morning," I answer bitterly. . . . My wife and I, in fact, have arrived at the conclusion that there is only one safe place in London to live in, and that is Kensington Palace Gardens, where there is a gate-keeper at each end. And so I say to her: "If that new book of yours, *The Judgment of Solomon*, has the success I consider it ought to have, and is followed by other successes, and I have the good fortune to make an operatic hit, we will end our earthly days in that musicians' heaven, and incidentally obtain a foretaste of the other heaven to which we eventually hope to go."

In the meantime I have to stay where I am and keep my double windows closed when I work and when I play the piano—which is more than other people do. Indeed, I am occasionally forced to write letters, couched in the most polite terms, asking my neighbours to oblige a colleague by doing unto him as they would that he should do unto them, namely, close the windows. Last summer a violinist with a loud and penetrating tone which proved an obstruction to the inflow of my hard-gotten ideas, was the recipient of

one of these letters: and the reply was not without an element of the tragi-comical. "What you ask me to do," he wrote, "is impossible." He went on to say that he failed even to understand *why* I should ask him to close his window: he sometimes composed himself, and far from finding other musical sounds a disturbance, he found them decidedly stimulating; he would, however, make one concession: in future he would play with the mute on. . . . Soon after the receipt of this letter I went away for the summer; on my return, thank goodness, he had disappeared.

On another occasion I was much disturbed by a singer; but this time I took no steps in the matter—it was she who wrote to *me* instead. Her letter was to the effect that she knew my name, and asked if she might come and sing to me with the view to obtaining my advice: should she take up singing as a profession, and if so, how was she to set about getting engagements? I wrote back politely and at some length, and said that as to coming to sing to me, it was quite unnecessary, she having been in the habit of letting me hear her efforts along that line for some hours every day. I agreed that she had a fine voice, but pointed out that the difficulties of entering the profession were considerable, and that the musical world was already overrun with singers of every type, size, and description. In short, I discouraged her; and I gather that she took my advice, for she eventually moved into another house and set up as a chiropodist.

As a matter of fact the connection between chiropody and vocalists is not so remote as might appear on the surface. Metaphorically speaking, if not actually, the latter are much troubled with corns, and the heavy-footed composer is continually treading upon them. It is only necessary to dedicate a song to one singer for the others to refuse to sing it—or *not* to dedicate a particular song to a particular singer for her likewise to refuse. "When are you going to write a song for

me ? " is the question which is invariably put when I meet a vocalist for the first time ; and, of course, wishing to be agreeable, I chide myself for the omission, and tell the lady it shall be remedied at the earliest possible opportunity. Yet if I do remedy it, the chances are the dedicatee never sings it after all—she complains that it is too high or too low, too dramatic or too undramatic, too sad or too gay, or that the words are not quite suitable ; so the song falls between two stools, and my long-suffering publisher is landed with a species of white elephant.

But apart from the vexed question of dedications, there are other ways of treading on singers' corns.

One evening at a musical party I saw a very handsome woman of large proportions and Spanish appearance sitting some distance away with a companion. " Mr Cyril Scott," she said, beckoning ; " come and talk to me."

" Delighted," I replied, making my way with difficulty through rows of closely packed chairs.

" I suppose you know who I am ? " she asked.

" Madame D——," I answered, bowing.

" But you don't show half enough enthusiasm," she complained temperamentfully ; " considering how I have known and loved and sung your songs, I expected something very different from this ! "

Not knowing what she actually did expect, I murmured vague apologies. The music then began and I was obliged to return to my seat. But I was soon to be enlightened. When the party was over and I got into the street, I found Madame D—— talking to the cellist Mr Cedric Sharp ; and as he was going to drive me home, I joined them.

" Ah," she exclaimed, " here is this cold-blooded Englishman—incomprehensible, I call it. When he meets me for the first time, instead of leaping across the chairs with one bound right into my arms, he strolls towards me as if I were just anybody—I who sang his

songs all over Australia, and look upon them almost as my children. And yet the father of my children, look how he behaves towards me—cold—indifferent. I consider it inhuman—absolutely inhuman."

It is partly her histrionic talents, I thought as I stepped into the motor, which make Madame D—— such a great artist; sometimes it seems regrettable that I am not likewise gifted—but then, for one thing, I am not Spanish. . . .

Which reminds me of another Spanish singer. She came over from Paris with the intention of making a great splash in the musical ocean, and had been told by a friend to come and ask my advice; she arrived two hours after the appointed time to receive it, and even to take it down in writing. A veritable torrent of questions poured from her scarletly-painted lips: what agent did I recommend? should she give a recital or an orchestral concert? if the latter, what orchestra, what conductor, what hall? if the former, what accompanist? should she sing in Spanish costume or wouldn't that go down in England? also what songs of mine should she sing and would I show her a selection, tell her the name of a teacher for diction, and then perhaps accompany the songs at the concert? Of course I tried to give her the best advice of which I was capable; but felt I ought to warn her at the outset of the prodigious expense of an orchestral concert. She told me magnificently that as she expected to get the Prince of Wales and other grandees to attend, she had no fears for the result, so I proceeded to answer her other questions. For agents, I suggested Ibbs & Tillett; for hall, Queen's Hall; for conductor, Eugene Goossens; for accompanist, Anthony Bernard; for diction lessons, Mrs Ann Thursfield. Then at her request I showed her a number of my songs; she decided on three and took them home to study. After she had departed I opened all the windows—the pungency of her perfume had permeated the entire house.

Ten days passed, and I heard that the orchestral concert-project had dwindled into a recital, and that not on one single point had she taken my advice. Other agents were selected, another accompanist, the diction lessons were abandoned together with my songs; the awkward part being that meanwhile I had telephoned to these various people, apprising them of the good lady's arrival. But what amused me most in the matter was her apprehension that I should be mortally offended because of this cavalier treatment of my songs: indeed, she considered it necessary to ask her friend to "smooth things over," little dreaming that I was if anything rather relieved, since when she had sung for me, she sang consistently flat from start to finish. Nor was she altogether pacified when I sent a message to say I quite understood and was not in the least annoyed. "It is impossible!" she contended; "he is only saying that—why, of course he *must* be upset that I do not sing his songs!"

Yet in spite of her entertaining vanities, I will say she was one of the few musical débutantes who did not credit me with manifold powers I do not possess. There are young vocalists who, forgetting I am merely a composer, come and sing to me and then carry away the delusion that I have only to say the word—to *whom*, they don't specify—in order to get them engagements all over London and the provinces. If this were a fact, nothing would give me greater pleasure than to fulfil their expectations; but it is *not*: in reality executants have much more power than composers. Something similar occurs in connection with young men who send me their compositions and ask me to write them my opinion, and then to give them an introduction to publishers. But here again my powers are over-estimated. If the compositions are genuinely good—which is rarely the case—they are of no commercial value; if they are bad, one has too much consideration for one's publisher to thrust them upon

him : he, too, chafes at wasted time and wasted postage stamps.

And since I am on the subject of unsolicited communications, there are the lyricists to contend with ; a formidable army recruited from young and old of both sexes. These versifiers include business-men, schoolmasters, parsons, and, judging from the writing, I should think domestic servants. There is an astonishing similarity between all their efforts, which are liberally interlarded with terms of extreme endearment, and for the most part have but one subject—waiting lovers. . . . The only difference to be noted is under what conditions the lovers wait ; whether the moon be rising or the sun setting or the grass be wet—not with rain but with dew. Other of these efforts relate of fairy bowers and magic seas, and rosebuds that talk to dew-drops, and bees that make love to flowers which do not happen to bloom in the honey-collecting season. I imagine that the *modus operandi* of many of these poetasters is to take the most banal song they can find and compile verses as nearly resembling it as they can without actually copying. It is a harmless pastime, I grant, but I fervently wish they would not post the result to *me*—with price-list included. Although I am not devoid of fellow-feeling, I cannot set deplorable lyrics to music just because people suffer from poverty or vanity—mostly the latter. . . . Often I am not merely requested to return the lyrics, but to express my opinion, which only on rare occasions I can bring myself to do, for I hate inflicting wounds even on people who need some slight treatment with the lancet. Besides which, letter-writing takes time, and I have far too little at my disposal as it is.

Yet I must be fair-minded ; out of all the thousands of lyrics I have received, I have, unless my memory errs, set *four* to music ; these were not the most original that were sent, but merely the most passable. As it happens, my own poems were responsible for

my receiving a truly original, if hardly poetical set of verses from a Captain ——, whose name I will withhold, for although he was killed in the war his wife is still alive. This Captain wrote saying he had been much impressed by the ethics set forth in some of my poems, which had inspired him to write several stanzas which, he felt sure, if put to music might do some good in the world. He therefore took the liberty of enclosing them and presenting them to me as a gift.

I quote some of the more choice specimens.

" Said Mr Black to Mr Tann :
' My wife's in love with another man.
O woe is me, what shall I do,
My honour's broken right in two ? '

Said Mr Tann to Mr Black :
' Surely in common sense you lack !
Could you expect your pretty wife
To love but you her whole long life ?
Considering all your own " affairs,"
You certainly might leave her hers :
But ever a selfish brute was man,'
Said sorrowfully Mr Tann."

" Said Mr Troward to Mr Root :
' " So long," I'm just off for a shoot ;
The weather's fine, I'm sure we ought
To have a really grand day's sport.'

Said Mr Root to Mr Troward :
' I feel, my friend, you are a coward.
On Sunday last you went to church,
And heard the preacher from his perch
On pity and compassion speak,
And how the strong should shield the weak ;
And yet to-day you go and shoot
An utterly defenceless brute ;
And what is more without a thought
You think yourself a fine old sport.'

Said Mr T. to Mr R. :
' My learned friend you go too far,

God made the animals to be shot,
For souls they certainly have not ;
He made them so they might give pleasure
To gentlemen of means and leisure.'

Said Mr R. to Mr T. :
' Your arguments astonish me,
And out to you I'd like to point
Your reasoning is out of joint ;
No souls have animals, you say,
And so you calmly take away
The only thing which they have got—
Their lives—my friend, you're talking rot.' "

Of course I wrote back to the author of these singular compositions, thanking him for his kindness and the subtle compliment implied, but I felt constrained to point out that although his verses showed an example of laudable magnanimity, they were not entirely suited to the concert-hall ; singers were a fastidious race and would, I feared, prove refractory. Still, I was very happy to keep the lyrics, and if later on I saw any means of making use of them, I would certainly do so.

And I have kept my promise, although in a manner not anticipated.

It is, however, not only composers who receive strange requests along this line, but also publishers. Mr Elkin tells me that an eminent singer once called upon him and asked if one of his protégés might be induced to compose music for some very charming verses written by her niece.

" If you will show me the verses," said Mr Elkin, " I'll see what I can do."

" I'll recite them to you instead," was the answer ; and she proceeded to do so :

" Who gave us the sun and the moon and the stars ?
Who gave us the grass and the trees and the flowers ?
Why, God, tra la la,
Why, God, tra la la. . . ."

There were several more verses in the same vein. "I quite see," Mr Elkin said courteously, "that they contain a very pretty sentiment, but don't you think perhaps that the public might—er—consider them—well—a trifle irreverent?"

"How do you mean?" she asked, "I really don't see. . . ."

"The conjunction of such an expression of levity with the name of the Deity——"

But no—Madame could not see it, and presumably thought publishers quite incomprehensible people.

CHAPTER XVII

MY LITERARY MUSEUM

I HAVE from time to time received from Orientals letters which are not without a certain exotic charm. One of these gentlemen—a Japanese—sent me a composition for the unusual combination of two voices (without words) and a violin. Even the way it was copied and spaced on a large sheet of paper with a very wide margin showed the inherent artisticness of the Japanese mind.

" Dear Sir," his letter ran, " I should be very glad if you would kindly accept my best wish of putting my *Teneramente* on your music-desk. Moreover, could I ask you to give your kindly looking at some manuscripts of my works that have been sent to Messrs Elkin & Co.

" I hope eagerly to meet your kind acquaintance, dear sir, and please kindly appreciate my deepest respect and faith.

I am yours very truly,

YOSHIJI TANIMURA."

But a more exotic letter, replete with a luxuriant floweriness of language, was received by my publisher from a young Indian temporarily living in London.

" Sirs," he wrote, " although it is with trepidation that I importune you with my request, yet I beg of you to tell me if Mr Cyril Scott resides in London, and if you think he would grant a fervent admirer from India the great felicity of a brief interview for publication. . . ."

The writer went on to describe at great length his sensations upon hearing certain of my pieces, and also my " Songs of Cathay," " sung by the lips of a singer tremulous with emotion and fully ripe in the display of her art. . . ."

" Sirs," he concluded his panegyric, " in view of the abundance of the poetical imagery which the inspirations of Mr Cyril Scott engender in the brain, I beg of you to facilitate an assignation for me (should it be within your power) that it may be possible for me to materialise the article I have in my mind's eye.

" Sirs ! I ask you to forgive me for thus importuning you, and to believe me,

Yours most honourably,

R. C. HIRALAL."

Shortly after Mr Elkin had received this letter, my wife and I dined with him in company with Mr Walter Kramer, the *littérateur* and composer of New York, and also Mrs Ann Thursfield.

" I hope you will give him his interview," Mr Elkin said, after reading the letter aloud to us. " You certainly can't refuse a man who asks as ' nicely ' as all that ! "

But at first I demurred. I felt I should be quite unable to act up to such undeserved eulogies, and that the meeting might prove an exceedingly embarrassing one. Yet, as Mr Elkin looked disappointed, I eventually yielded to his persuasions and those of our fellow-guests. The interview took place, the article was written, and Mr Hiralal very kindly sent me the translation. I have forgotten whether the original was to be in Pali, Bengali, or Tamil, though Mr H. told me at the time. When he posted me the article, he wrote :

" Peradventure I shall also publish the translation in some journal devoted to the English tongue in India.

In any case, allow me the pleasure of intimating to you that I lay the said translation at your feet, should you wish to offer same to any editor in this country."

He told me in conclusion that he was leaving for India, but that if I cared to write any comment on his article, I could address him until a certain date " Poste Restante, Benares."

Unfortunately I have not been able to decide to what journal in England I could send the article, so am reprinting it, slightly abridged, here in my memoirs instead, its author having, as he poetically expressed himself, " laid it at my feet." It is also conceivable that through this means it may be more widely read than if it had appeared in any one magazine, which, after all, is Mr Hiralal's intention.

Cyril Scott

The Minstrel of the West with the Soul of the East

At five hours after noon, I presented myself at the residence of the renowned musician, a house of many chambers, and was ushered by a servant in lamp-black garments into a closet resembling the antechamber of a prince ; for it was adorned by a canopy and rich in upholstery, as the throne of a Maharajah is covered with a dome and rich in cushions. Furthermore it was lighted by windows with variegated panes and abounding in purple and red and saffron and blue, as the windows of occidental temples abound in pigmented glass, portraying the picture of the Avatar of the West and His disciples ; furthermore it was decorated by walls of gold and a lapis lazuli ceiling prinked with stars, as the welkin is in all seeming dyed by the colour blue and at night-time prinked with the Milky Way ; furthermore it was enlivened by the semi-statue of a dame, clasping to her urn-like bosom a bunch of flowers, as lovers clasp the hands of cherished mistresses to their capacious chests.

Meanwhile in the cool shade of this closet, a treasure-house, so to term it, of the devices of the Goddess of artistic inspira-

tion, drinking in the nectar of its peacefulness and tabulating in my memory its multitudinous objects of beauty, I awaited the arrival of the proprietor. Then unostentatiously, without ushers, and softly, like a cake of butter, Musician Scott entered the closet and graciously saluted me with a movement, once up, once down, of our united hands in accordance with the customs of the occident; and having seated himself on the upholstered seat, he began to converse with me respecting my welfare and my worship of the Gandharvas. His slender body was surmounted by a face which was the looking-glass, as it were, of a soul continuously laved by the cool waters of a gently-flowing river whose surface is undisturbed by ripples, as the surface of a mirror is undisturbed by a high wind; his forehead was indented with a few grooves, depicting, so to put it, the multitudinous exertions of his ever-working mind, and burnt, one might say, by the fires of his intellect, as the lava projected from a volcano burns grooves in the mountain-side; his cheeks were smooth and denuded of all hair; his eyes were of a light hue, the repository in all seeming of melodious treasures to be lavished upon straining listeners eager for enjoyment, as women are eager for the embraces of their paramours; his mouth likewise smooth and thus unencumbered by moustachios was, so to express it, a spring of learning from which issued a continual stream of wise sayings, as wisdom issues from the mouths of Sadhus; for he caused me astonishment by his knowledge of the Upanishats and the Yoga Sutras, as blind pundits cause astonishment by the infinite retentiveness of their memories; he afforded me delight by the benignity of his smile, as a rajah affords delight by bestowing the favour of his glance on his devoted chamberlain: he awakened my gratitude by presenting me to his spouse (who meanwhile had entered the apartment) as a religious mendicant feels gratitude when offered a bowl of rice.

Then, after partaking of the tea of my own land and the sweet cakes which plenteously abound in the British Isles, at the instigation of the same gracious spouse we passed into a second apartment (likewise artfully adorned) where was situated the piano instrument of the musician. Then said that same gracious spouse, cajoling her husband: "Exhibit to the Babu some of your skill on the piano organ, and thus gratify his ears." To which I added (uplifted, so to say, by

the prospects of the delight): "Do, I beg of you, as the gracious lady requests, for in all sincerity do I second her proposal, yet it behoved me not to importune you with the demand from my own lips, by reason of my modesty and an access of trepidation."

Then straightway with a smile, Musician Scott opened the piano organ and played his most renowned "Lotusland" with long tapering fingers that caressed for a while slowly and with great sweetness, as a lover caresses the heavy tresses of his favourite mistress, the array of white and black ivory and ebony slabs before which he was seated; then with unrelatable dexterity ran hither and thither over his instrument like the dainty pink feet of a multitude of white mice when disturbed by their arch-enemy, the wild cat, in the watches of the dark hours shortly after the orb of day has expired, as it were, in its bath of crimson blood; or again as hosts of white ants madly rush to and fro when the enormous black foot of a musk elephant crushes to a pulp their most cherished habitation, leaving them utterly nonplussed, as the populace of a village in a volcanic region is utterly nonplussed by the devastation caused by a tremendous earthquake; and as I myself was nonplussed at such an unprecedented exhibition of velocity, scarcely knowing how to express myself at the termination of the performance, for my tongue seemed, so to say, rooted between my dentals, and frustrated of its function of utterance.

Then said his same gracious spouse, as if to rescue me from the dark morass of my embarrassment: "Exhibit, I pray you, my beloved, another specimen of your art, namely, that which you have designated 'Rainbow-trout.'" And I, finding a sufficient diminution of my embarrassment, once again respectfully seconded her request.

Then straightway, as the renewed sounds of the instrument fell on my ears, I became sensible—as if transported in my Kama-rupa—of eventide in my own beloved land, when the tree-tops are resonant with the tintinabulous notes of multitudinous nightingales, intoxicated in the mating-season with the exuberance of their own songfulness, and commingling with the cries of peacocks and the croaking of frogs and the chirpings of hosts of other warblers after they have bathed in the puddles and indulged in manifold quarrellings among themselves;

when the armies of uncountable monkeys have been stimulated to increased monkey-tricks by the enlivening effect of a vesperal breeze wafted from the snowy summits of the Himalayas ; and the corpulent female pariahs, odorous because of perspiration which has partly dried on their ebony bodies, have returned from their scavenging labours ; when the courtesans are, so to put it, on the tip-toe of expectation for the arrival of their newest and most cherished client ; when acrimonious menials are disgusted at having to wipe away the soilure of innumerable sparrows from the garden-seats, because their masters and mistresses want to sit down thereon in the cool of the evening ; when the string of gnats, one might say, is suspended in the air and about to titivate the ear of a very aged one-horned cow run dry of all milk and retaining, so to express it, nothing whatsoever but its sanctity, yet still giving of its sacred, toad-stool-fertilising manure wherewith to cleanse the household pots and pans of rich and poor alike ; when the artisans have given over collecting the chair-bottom cane from the creepers which fringe the side of the pond in which damsels of unusual beauty disport their exquisitely rounded chocolate buttocks, as they bathe in its water to the music of their own splashing ; when the dew-drops from a recent shower in the rainy season leave a myriad diamonds in the hearts of full-blown lotuses, torn between ecstasy at the fullness of the moon and the anguish of the prospect of separation as it gradually disappears, growing thinner and more emaciated in the process of leaving its army of sweethearts ; when multicoloured and exceedingly beautiful little birds are intensely gratified by the cool ooze of trillions of infinitesimal globules like moonstones from the playful fountains in the pleasure-gardens ; when, after having polished their toe-nails to the brightness of sea-shells, the dancing-girls alluringly gyrate their abdomens to a bevy of elderly profligates desirous of feeling youthful again ; when even the fiercest bulls are rendered tame from exhaustion by reason of their having spent an afternoon in a field of cows, and having been tormented by unbearable spoil-sports in the shape of swarms of intolerable flies lusting, one might so term it, solely after the pleasure of giving annoyance ; when clusters of bees, like vivified necklaces of jet beads, bathe in the intoxicating aromatic exhalations from the champaks and are not to be frightened away from their proximity to a pair of Brahminy

ducks by a herd of geese saying " Quack-quack "—in a word, by the incontestable magic nascent within the heterogenous array of the notes of the minstrel playing upon his piano-instrument, I was transported, as already said, to the land of my forefathers at the sacred hour of sunset; and furthermore, as at times the strains soared into unusually superearthly lovelinesses, I seemed to be caressed by the unmentionable exquisiteness of the cascade of notes of the very flute of Krishna Himself, wafted, so to say, from the plane of Brahmaloka by a supernal zephyr, and conveyed, as it were, on its downward course by scores of shining Devas, multicoloured and ecstatically radiant like series of opalescent living fountains planted one above the other on an unending golden staircase studded with precious stones and leading to infinity, yet continually changing their hues by reason of a magical sun of Devachan for ever shining, yet for ever altering, as it hung suspended like an enormous metal gong in an ocean of Bliss.

Then, as Musician Scott ceased his playing, I descended to earth with an unbearable thud like a poultice of clay dropped from the clouds by the hand of the Creator, who was encumbered by a superfluous lump after His formation of the world: and when once again I contrived to unloosen the cords which controlled my tongue, I said: " Sir, it seems to me that your mind is, so to say, a repository of manifold memories brought over from a previous birth, when under *Tamala* trees you listened to the music of the Gandharvas, for of a certainty your inspiration is not of the occident but of the orient itself." Then said he with the suspicion of a smile: " I have no recollection of an Indian birth, yet who knows—for an absence of recollection is no criterion of an absence of fact, and certainly, as I already told you, I am much given over to the study of the philosophies of your own land, and have wandered along manifold paths in search of truth, like a Sadhu wanders from place to place with nothing but a staff and a begging-bowl for rice—for I have endeavoured to empty my mind, so to put it, of all encumbrances in the shape of prejudices, as the Sadhu rids himself of all encumbrances in the shape of worldly goods. Moreover, my predilection for the Tantras and Shastras must have emanated from somewhere and cannot be the result of a total impossibility, like a thunderstorm out of a totally cerulean sky."

Then said I approvingly : " You have done well, and shown much perspicacity, for the Goddess of Truth is not to be cajoled into giving of her ambrosia by pompous ignoramuses who, deeming they know everything, vitiate their palate by the consumption of dirt, so that they are unable to taste the exquisiteness of that ambrosia when placed before them at table."

And after other converse, and the expression of my gratitude in no mean terms, I took my leave.

Readers—Musician Scott is verily a wordless poet touched by the soul of India ; for he evokes a multitude of oriental images in the listener's mind ; he is a nightingale singing alone in a dense forest rendered discordant by the harsh cries of hosts of wild beasts, for he sings, so to say, amid the harsh noises of London ; he is a guinea-pig among musicians, for he has created an abundance of pieces as guinea-pigs create an abundance of other guinea-pigs ; he is a juggler of art, for he juggles with many parts at one and the same time as a juggler juggles with many balls with one hand ; he is an elephant of minstrelsy, for he has broken down the obstacles to fame as elephants break down strong shrubs ; he is, if one might term it, a lady-killer of melody, for the whole triple world is perfumed in all seeming by the odour of his melodies ; he is, as it were, an orb of day of music, for his rays have reached to the four corners of the earth, and gratified the hearts of the inhabitants of all countries.

To prevent misconceptions I should state that the room described is a Gothic one with an Italian renaissance appearance. Also that my wife merely said : " Why don't you play Mr Hiralal some of your things, dear ? "

I have shown the article to several people, some of whom have lived in India, but they tell me they do not know of any modern literature or journalese quite resembling it. They suggest, therefore, that Mr Hiralal has been inspired by ancient Sanskrit works—a suggestion with which I am inclined to agree, as for one thing he admitted that Sanskrit was his special hobby.

Whether he was aware of the striking effect of his imagery upon the European mind, I cannot say; but it would seem that some Indian journalists feel constrained to apologise for their flowery outpourings. The singer Miss Gertrude Johnson tells me that after one of her performances an Indian approached her and said: "I am going to write an article on your singing; I hope you won't mind if it is couched in very extravagant language. . . ."

There is one more letter I may add to my "literary museum," for it is associated in my memory with the occasion on which Mr Elkin read to us the Hiralal communication. "Perhaps *you* can oblige," he said as he handed it to me.

"*To* Mr Elkin.

"Sir,—I respectfully request to be informed by you or Ed. MacDowell, Esq., the American composer, how many pounds will it cost to have a song of three verses set to sweet soft music. Further, if the composer wish, I will give him an idea of the music of my heart, which may be best for the song. I sent the song to Her Most Gracious Majesty Queen Mary, and your kind advertisement, and I informed Her Majesty that I would ask Ed. MacDowell, Esq., the American composer, to set my song to sweet soft music.

"Perhaps it may be hard for you to tell me in your reply how many pounds it will cost to have my sweet little song of three verses set to sweet soft music, or perhaps you will say call round and see me. Remember I do not want to put you or the composer to any unprofitable trouble, so again I beg of you to tell me as near as you can, how many pounds will it cost to set the song to sweet soft melody. I will then be able to go to a friend and ask him if he will pay you the money. Then will I have a benefit out of my song for I can sell it to you or any other music publisher. When I

have your reply on paper, I will then be able to send it to a friend of mine and ask him to send the Song to the Composer and the money to pay to get it set, then the Composer can send for me and he will find my heart filled with sweet rich melody though I am now old."

Writers of letters of this nature do not always first ascertain whether the composers in question are still alive.[1] My other publisher, Mr Willy Strecker, told me he received a communication addressed to Joh. Brahms, Esq., and as there are as yet no facilities for forwarding letters to heaven, he opened it. The writer, a lady, informed Mr Brahms that she much admired his "pretty songs," and would be glad to know if he would set some lyrics of hers (which she enclosed) to music.

Sometimes, though less often, the music publisher is requested to furnish the address of a long-deceased poet. An American woman wrote asking how she might best communicate with Mr Ben Jonson, whose charming verses gave her such pleasure. She was, in fact, anxious that he should write some lyrics for her to set to music. I once made a similar, though not quite so flagrant, mistake myself. Wishing to use some verses by John Addington Symonds for the song which afterwards appeared as "A Spring Ditty," I wrote to him asking for permission. In answer I received a letter from his executors which ran: "You seem to be unaware that Mr John Addington Symonds has been dead for seventeen years—but we feel sure he would have been pleased to give you permission to use his verses. . . ."

[1] Mr Ed. MacDowell has been dead some years.

CHAPTER XVIII

THERAPEUTICAL ADVENTURES

I LOOK back to my time with Isherwood in Queen's Road for the most part as a time of therapeutical adventures, in which my friend joined. Neither of us being robust, we hailed the discovery of a new " cure " with as much delight as a naturalist a new insect ; for, although we had both derived benefit from a vegetarian diet, we were not content to stop at that ; other measures were adopted in addition. Thus, first we tried the Fletcher Cure, which I chanced upon while lunching with the singer Mr Theodore Byard. This consisted in chewing one's food until it " swallowed itself." For years Henry James, as he told me, had derived great benefit from it, but came to give it up after a while, as we also did : for not being cows, we forgot to chew, rallied briefly, forgot again, and finally relapsed into our old habits. After that we tried the Cold Water Cure as practised by L. Kuhne of Leipsic, I having heard of it through Mrs Isaac Bell, Mr Gordon Bennett's sister ; but as this necessitated among other practices the taking of packs, we found that it covered our bed-linen with mildew, so it was likewise abandoned. Our next attempts consisted in adopting various systems of physical exercises, but as my heart was not over strong, these were also given up after a few months, and a long and complete fast was tried instead. I had, in fact, read Upton Sinclair's article on " Fasting as a Cure for all Ills," and so one morning determined I would eat nothing for a week ; my friend made the same resolve. It might be supposed

that we should feel hungry, but this was not the case, and after the first twenty-four hours all desire for food left us ; even when the week was over neither of us experienced the least pangs of hunger, and in the end had to force ourselves to eat. For my own part, I felt very limp and drowsy most of the time ; but my friend, on the contrary, was unusually energetic, and looked better than he had done for some months. I think, however, the fast did me a certain amount of good, seeing that for a while afterwards my headaches showed improvement. They were at any rate less continuous, and for a few hours in the day left me in comparative peace. These headaches possessed other drawbacks besides pain and discomfort : they were indirectly responsible for hurting the feelings of others. If I lunched in society I was unable to converse with my table neighbour owing to a debilitating drowsiness which made me only half conscious of my surroundings ; and because of this it was not surprising that people obtained peculiar impressions of me. In a roundabout way I would come to hear that some woman had said : " Pity Cyril Scott is so conceited ; I sat next to him at lunch the other day, and he hardly said a word to me ; I suppose he thinks I'm beneath his notice." Yet how wide of the actual truth ! The days had long since passed when I thought people not worth talking to. Of course the obvious thing to have done would have been to decline all invitations, but my headaches were of so erratic a nature that I never knew exactly when they would come on, nor when they would depart. One thing I did come eventually to know was that from three to five in the afternoon there was no escape from them, and so I refused to make any appointments during those hours, and went to sleep instead.

But it is not only for conceit that my " thorn in the flesh " has given me a reputation—it is also for eccentricity. Lady Cunard tells a story about me which originated in this necessity for an afternoon rest.

Having lunched at her house one day I said : " As I have to go on somewhere else later in the afternoon, do you mind if I lie down in one of your spare bedrooms for an hour and have a nap ? " She looked rather astonished at such a request, but replied : " Certainly, if you wish. I'll tell one of the servants to show you upstairs." Not long afterwards we were lunching together at the French Embassy, and the conversation turned upon the subject of eccentric people. " Ah," exclaimed Lady Cunard in her charmingly vivacious manner, " if you really want to see an eccentric man, here is Cyril Scott. In the middle of a luncheon-party he'll throw up his arms and say : ' For heaven's sake show me to a bedroom and let me have a sleep—I'm bored to extinction ! ' "

But as I said, the fast did me some good, especially as I had returned after it to a modified form of the Fletcher Cure ; indeed, I intended to repeat the former, but found something much more efficacious in its place—it was herbalism of a very specific kind. While taking a stroll one day in Notting Hill Gate I entered a little health food store and got into conversation with a Mr Benjamin Foster. He was running this store to oblige some people in the north, but told me he was by profession a botanic practitioner and gave treatments in his small consulting-room at the back of the shop. I asked him to tell me the nature of the treatments, and in a breezy Lancashire dialect and manner, which I make no attempt to reproduce, he expounded what seemed to me the most rational method of handling disease I had ever encountered. For the last five years I had read every sort and size of book on therapeutics, and they one and all agreed that the prime cause of most human ills was the presence of toxins in the body : they merely differed as to the methods which should be employed to remove those toxins. In any case, the process was a gradual and laborious one, while Mr Foster's, on the contrary, was speedy and in no way

connected with the use of poisonous drugs. " I have not one drop of poison in the whole of my stock-in-trade," he declared.

Briefly described, Mr Foster's *modus operandi* is through the medium of his herb teas to draw all the toxins from the various parts of the body into the stomach, and then, to use his own phrase, to " tip up the stomach," the whole treatment lasting from an hour and a half to two hours—according to the condition of the patient.

" I was once an engineer," he said, " and I learnt a few things. When an engine gets clogged up, it won't work—it's the same with these bodies of ours. Remove the toxins which clog up the organs, then they'll function properly. . . . The result is health."

And it has been my experience that he spoke the truth. After two treatments I felt lighter, better, and more clear-headed than I had felt for a long time. Although the headaches were not completely cured, they showed a more distinct improvement than they had after any previous treatment. To my intense delight I found I could sketch a large choral work in a fortnight, and without any noticeable strain. But, above all, certain other distressing complaints from which I suffered vanished, and have never returned.

Shortly after my meeting with Mr Foster he gave up the shop and moved to Gower Street, where he has remained ever since, and has, with astonishing results, treated nearly every friend I possess. A relative of mine who had been ill for ten years, and had spent hundreds of pounds on specialists, all to no purpose, was cured in two treatments. Even doctors have allowed themselves to be cured by this miscalled " quack " from Lancashire, who, by the way, is as altruistic as he is efficient.

Yet my nature is such—a curious one, I admit—that I shall continue to busy myself with therapeutics until I lie on my death-bed. Even when my headaches

are completely cured, there are my fellow-sufferers to be considered ; and as some utterly refuse to visit Mr Foster and to be made to vomit, other means must be found to suit their unheroic temperaments. One of these means, as I discovered in 1916, is Osteopathy. I had heard of a Dr Grantham Browne, an American, of Mandeville Place, from a lady who suggested that my head trouble came from a structural defect. I accordingly paid Dr G. B. a visit, and was about to tell him my symptoms when he cut me short.

" Let me examine you first, and *I* will tell you your symptoms—that is how we osteopaths go to work."

He felt my spine, and in less than a minute remarked : " I guess you suffer from rotten headaches."

" That is exactly why I've come to you," I said. " Can you cure them ? "

" I can improve them some," was the answer, " but your atlas has been out of place for so long, I don't see much chance of ever getting it back again. If you'd had osteopathic treatment ten years ago, you could have been cured."

I was disappointed, yet impressed. Hitherto every doctor had asked : " Well, now, what is the trouble ? " Dr Grantham Browne had told *me* the trouble, without asking a single question. Needless to say, I sent him many patients, and received nothing but gratitude from them in return. Incidentally I saved myself a fashionable operation. One day I was unpleasantly conscious of appendicitis pains. " If I had those pains," said a medical friend, " I should have my appendix out." But I was not of his opinion, and thought I would consult my osteopath instead ; and very thankful I was that I did so. " Those pains," he declared, with some amusement at my fears, " are merely neuralgia of the twelfth intercostal nerve, and have nothing whatever to do with your appendix." He then proceeded to treat me, and after two visits my " mythical appendicitis " troubled me no more.

I am often amused to find that I know more about the latest discoveries in therapeutics than my several doctor-friends. The other day I mentioned Zone-therapy to one of them.

"Never heard of it," he said.

"And yet two M.D.'s have written a book on it!"

"Maybe; still, I have never heard of it," he repeated.

"Well, have you heard of spinal percussion for the treatment of heart and other diseases?" I asked, beginning to enjoy myself.

"Never!"

"Or Bates' epoch-making book on the treatment of defective eyesight without glasses?"

"No, nor that either."

"Nor the Colour Treatment as practised by Dr J. Dodson Hessey of Hastings—he wrote a pamphlet on the subject?"

My friend shook his head.

"Curious . . ." I reflected, and changed the subject. But it seemed to me as remarkable as if I had never heard of Stravinsky or Schönberg. What sort of music should I write if the last composer I had ever listened to was Brahms?

CHAPTER XIX

WAGNER'S PUBLISHERS

AFTER Isherwood and I had lived together in Queen's Road for two years, he decided to take the cottage which had previously belonged to the Marriott-Watsons, and to reside permanently at Shere ; *they* had moved into a house near Albury Heath. But I was not to be left without a companion : at Norman O'Neill's I had met a Mr William Shand, who was on the look-out for a domicile, and was, as it happened, glad to share one with *me*. Mr Shand, though by profession an electrical engineer, is a keen musician, and in his spare time writes songs of by no means a commonplace type. Like Bonnier, he proved to be a most kind and unselfish companion, and during our sojourn together there was hardly a day when he was not befriending some unfortunate who had got into trouble, and needed sympathy and advice.

Among his many friends he numbered an eminent poetess, since deceased, and her family, with whom he one day took me to lunch. Later on, wishing to do the correct thing, I paid her an afternoon call, an unfortunate resolve on my part, for it was brought home to me that I had not " called "—I had *intruded*. . . . It seemed as if my presence pierced the warm incense-laden atmosphere of that adoring family like an uncomfortable chilly draught, and I felt almost as if I had been a passenger forced to enter a railway-carriage in which there was but a pair of lovers. Not that this singular family intended to show me any discourtesy : they merely made me feel conspicuous by their most

convincing assumption of my absence. I had made the mistake of calling upon them when no other visitors were present, and they were so engrossed in their own domestic affairs as to be oblivious of all else. But then few families are so united as this one. It is, of course, difficult to reproduce a conversation the purport of which one has not in the least understood, but as it was so characteristic, a fairly definite impression still remains in my mind.

" But darling," the poetess continued, addressing one of her daughters after greeting me, " I think little X. is adapting himself to circumstances in a most admirable manner—don't you, dear ? " to her son.

" I am quite satisfied with him myself," was the answer.

" But angel," from another daughter, " haven't you noticed how he clenches his poor, wee, little hands sometimes and——"

" Ah, the cherub," reverently enthused her mother ; " he is very highly strung. What does darling papa think about it ? "

" Well, my love, I should leave him where he is at present."

" Papa thinks he should be left where he is, sweetest," she informed her daughter, as if the latter were deaf.

" Ah, well, if darling papa thinks so . . ." returned that young lady.

" Of course I do think," observed the poetess, " too much stress has been laid on that one point."

" I'm inclined to agree with you," said the son ; " but then the whole thing is rather difficult to gauge correctly. I should be disposed to reconsider——"

" There are three mistakes in this one verse, my love," interrupted the husband, who sat over the fire correcting proofs.

They all jumped up, rushed to the fireplace, and looked over his shoulder to verify the statement.

" How painstaking you are, my dearest," his wife

said plaintively, as she leant over the chair-back and stroked his hair.

"Printers are sometimes very careless," he said, addressing me.

I agreed that they were, having had some experience of them myself.

"Let me think, darling V.—were there a great many mistakes in *your* last proofs?" asked the poetess, while they were all reseating themselves.

"I have really forgotten, beloved, I was so upset at your going away at the time that I——"

"*Dearest* one. . . ."

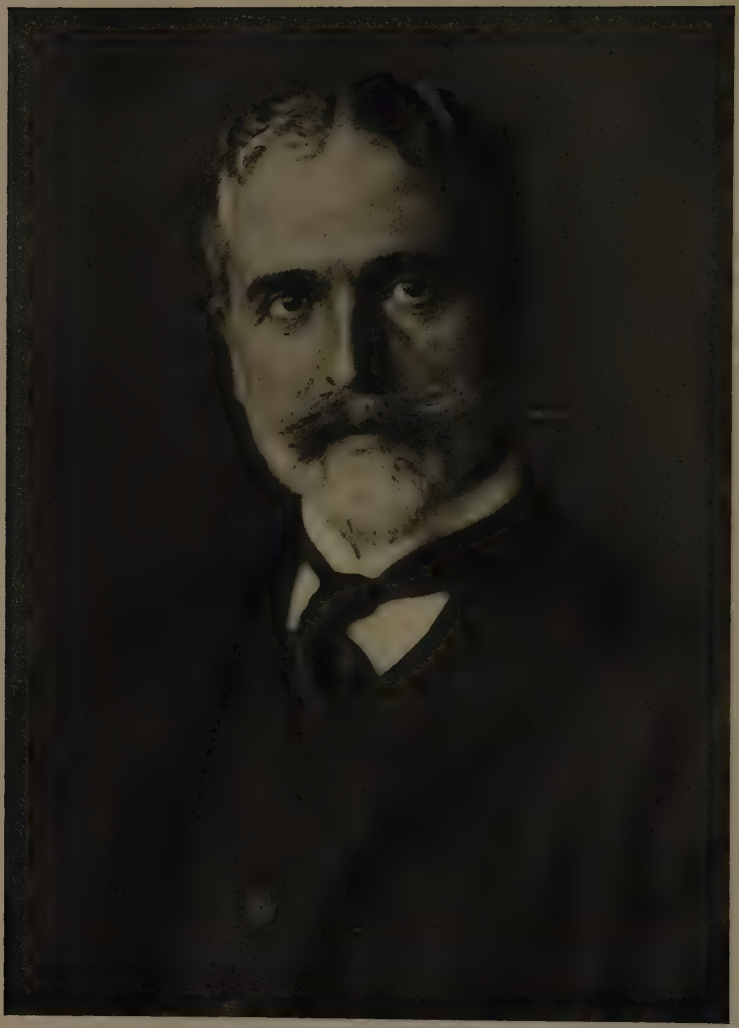
"When do you think you'll finish that next book of yours, V.?" said her brother.

"When *shall* I finish it, mother darling?"

It struck me as regrettable at the time that this family did not keep a dog: I might have employed myself by patting it, and so have been relieved of some of my embarrassment.

Our three years' agreement had come to an end, and as already stated my enemies the barrel-organists had quelled any desire on our part to renew it, especially as Shand had heard of the house which constitutes my present abode. But although he shared it with me for a while, I was soon to be left in sole possession—he got married and went to live at Woking; thus the last of my male partners in the business of housekeeping deserted me.

Yet I particularly remember the last few months at Queen's Road, because it was during these that I negotiated and finally signed a contract with B. Schott's Söhne of Mainz. I had met the head of that well-known firm of publishers—they printed Wagner's works—at Darmstadt when I went over to Germany to play at the Summer Festival. But my actual friendship with Dr Strecker and his two sons only came later through the exertions of Mr Elkin; he in-



HERR DR. STRECKER
OF B. SCHOTT'S SÖHNE, MAINZ

duced the house of Schott to act as representatives for my songs and pieces in Germany. While negotiations were in progress, I was, as it so happened, in Frankfurt, and to facilitate matters travelled to Mainz for a personal interview. I had a further object, which was to get my recently completed Violin Sonata published, this being the first I had written in irregular rhythms, and also the most " advanced."

And my interview proved a success ; Dr Strecker not only agreed to publish the Sonata—which was very broad-minded of him, considering its difficulties and unconventionalities—but he was willing to take up the Elkin pieces and make propaganda for them in Germany. Thus I walked out of the quaint and rather romantic offices of B. Schott's that winter evening very well pleased with the business I had transacted, and in addition, fascinated by Dr Strecker himself. It is not extravagant to say I found him the handsomest and most *distingué* man of his age—he must have been about fifty-eight at the time—I have so far come across ; and I do not write this merely as a counter-compliment to his whispered remark to my wife some eleven years later : " Your husband is the pride of our catalogue . . ." but because I consider it to be true. His character, moreover, was in keeping with his appearance. When the war was precipitated upon us, although of course all business transactions with the Mainz house were suspended, I nevertheless received private letters from him of the most warm and friendly nature. In answer to some greetings I sent him one year at Christmas time, he wrote that of all the Christmas surprises that had been prepared for him and his family, my letter had given him the most pleasure. Could any sentiment be more charmingly expressed ?

Soon after the publication of my Violin Sonata Dr Strecker came over to England, and at my rooms in Queen's Road made the proposal that I should hence-

forth let him publish all my violin pieces, piano pieces, and finally my larger works—chamber and orchestral. But although this proposal was greatly to my advantage, I was doubtful about letting him have my future piano pieces. Mr Elkin, so to say, had done all the spade-work, and I felt very forcibly that I was under moral obligations to him which I did not wish to evade. Yet, after discussing the matter together, Mr Elkin in my own interests very nobly stood aside, and in the end a compromise was made; Schott's were to have a certain number of my future piano compositions, and Elkin & Co. the remainder. In this manner the whole affair was satisfactorily arranged.

My associations with B. Schott's were soon to become even more pleasant, for Dr Strecker's son, Mr Willy Strecker, eventually decided to come and live in London and look after his English interests in England itself. Having married a very charming woman from the Argentine, he took a house in St John's Wood, which came to form a meeting-ground for many kindred souls. At this house I first met Mr Frank Bridge, and also that unique personality known practically to every musician in London, Don Pedro Morales. This mysterious Spaniard whom everybody loves and nobody quite understands, has not only become one of our—I include my wife—closest friends, but is, I believe, at the moment translating Dr Eaglefield Hull's book on myself into Spanish. I say advisedly "believe," because one never knows what Mr Morales actually *is* doing. At one time he is composing, at another writing verses or prose, playing the violin, translating Spanish plays, helping to run educational institutions or commercial enterprises—and when he is not doing any of these, he is paying well-chosen compliments to ladies or entertaining members of both sexes to *recherché* dinners and inimitable witticisms.

But I was writing of Mr Willy Strecker. It was he

who gave me the idea of composing the "Jungle Book" pieces, and also my suite for violin "Tallahassee." And to this latter I owe my friendship with Frau Alma Mahler, widow of the well-known conductor and composer. Her brother-in-law, Professor Rosé, whom later on I was to meet at Mr Robin Legge's, came across this piece, and on the strength of it sent to Schott's for the rest of my published violin works, which he then proceeded to try over with Frau Mahler, who is an accomplished pianist. One day I received a letter from Austria in a large and unfamiliar hand; the writer began by saying she was aware that it was most unconventional of her to address one whom she did not know personally, but she felt constrained to do so nevertheless. She went on to tell me she was Gustav Mahler's widow, and had spent many hours playing my sonata with Professor Rosé of the Rosé Quartet. She then expatiated at some length upon the sonata in question, and finally asked me if I had any orchestral works which I would like to have performed in Vienna: if so, she would try to arrange for their performance.

Of course I wrote back a very grateful letter, and ended by saying I hoped one day to come to Vienna and have the pleasure of making her acquaintance: this hope was fulfilled in 1912–1913.

Acting on the advice of Miss Daisy Kennedy, whom I had got to know at one of Sir Landon Ronald's concerts in Birmingham where I conducted, I decided to visit the Austrian capital. Miss Kennedy intended to spend some months there herself, and promised to introduce me to her friends, of whom she had many. As the time of our meeting drew nearer, I was naturally intrigued as to what Frau Mahler was really like. "Ah, when you see her, you'll experience something," was the idiomatic reply I got from various Austrian musicians whom I had asked. "She is a most beautiful apparition!" But she possessed other attractions than

mere beauty ; she was understanding and wonderfully intuitive. To my great relief, not once did she ask me the much dreaded question: what did I think of her late husband's compositions ? nor even allude to them in any way. She evidently sensed that my individual aims were so widely divergent from his gargantuan classical obviosities that I could not be expected to admire them ; moreover, she felt perhaps that my own silence on the subject was not without significance.

This visit to Vienna resulted in a performance of the *Princess Maleine* overture, which I had recently completed, also in a meeting with Eugen D'Albert, who promptly arranged an evening devoted to my chamber works and those of Delius at the Tonkünstler Verein, of which he was then the president. But of this evening I remember very little, except that D'Albert was sympathetic and generous with his appreciation—which goes to dispel that cynical illusion that composers and cats have something in common. I have met D'Albert many times since, and have always found him engagingly free from " side."

There is about him something so naïve, simple, and childlike—even his high voice is reminiscent of a child's—that one almost understands why seven women in succession have married him ! The last time I saw him was at a little gathering at the house of my friend the pianist Mr Howard Jones. On this occasion he played Bach's Chromatic Fantasia to us, and broke down in the middle. " I am so nervous," he exclaimed, with an apologetic snigger as he clutched his forehead, " I've forgotten the thing." There was a well-timed roar of laughter as Mr Howard Jones advised him to try again. . . .

It was not only D'Albert I met in Vienna that year, but many other musicians who, it would seem, occasionally visit that city to inhale its heavily-scented musical atmosphere ; among these was the pianist-composer

Mr John Powell, who invited me to lunch for the purpose of playing me his "Titanic Sonata." I am not a glutton, but I consider he made a mistake in not having lunch first and the Sonata afterwards—as it was, we sat down to that meal at four o'clock. . . . I grant the Sonata's excellence may, for all I know, be commensurate with its length, but that afternoon I was not in a fit condition to judge. As it was I felt debilitated enough with the innumerable gaieties, involving late hours, in which I had to participate. In Vienna it is only necessary to be an Englishman for people to invite one here, there, and everywhere. Yet in spite of the wreck to which, by the end of my stay, I was all but reduced, I promised to return to my many new friends the following year, and thus in the early part of 1914 found myself again in the Austrian capital. In the interim my *Princess Maleine* overture had been performed, and with enough success to cause the conductor, Professor Schrecker, to wish for a performance of the *Nativity Hymn*, a sacred Cantata I had just completed. As it turned out, however, the work was never performed, the war having intervened; and strangely enough the whole material was lost for four years, after which it was discovered in a cellar in Great Marlborough Street, and later on published by Stainer & Bell at the instigation of the Carnegie Trust.

When I finally went back to a very changed Vienna in 1922, in order to play my Piano Concerto, Professor Schrecker was no longer there, and his choral society had been disbanded for lack of funds. Yet, if material changes had taken place, the hearts of such people as I met were unchanged. Frau Mahler was charming as ever, and my wife and I spent some unforgettable evenings at her flat in company with Darius Milhaud, Professor Rosé, and several music *littérateurs*. Altogether as far as *our* treatment was concerned, there was no evidence that such a catastrophe as war had ever been. A Viennese conductor living in Elberfeld sought my

acquaintance with a view to performing my *Belle Dame Sans Merci*; another conductor from Mannheim put himself out to come and ask me to play him my opera; a very charming singer named Vera Maid-Tiller came over from Agram with her accompanist (who, by the way, would persist in calling me "*Verehrter Meister*," much to my embarrassment), and eventually gave a recital of my songs. In short, the English were as popular as ever.

CHAPTER XX

MISADVENTURES AND MISCONCEPTIONS

FROM my twenty-seventh to my thirty-fifth year, I spent at least four out of every twelve months travelling on the Continent. Every September I went to Switzerland where, apart from the Lüthys, I visited other friends, including a Mr and Mrs Kohl from Frankfurt, then living in Lausanne. With this dear couple I stayed for weeks on end and, engaged in writing verses, would walk up and down the terrace of their garden which commanded a view of the lake and mountains. These verses I would afterwards read to them in the evenings, for Mr Kohl was something of a philosopher and poet himself. I also formed an unforgettable friendship with a life-long comrade of old Alberto Randegger, the singing professor: Mr W. D. Darvell, who was at that time living with his wife and daughter in Clarens. It says much for his musical breadth of mind—for he had reached his sixty-fifth year when I first met him—that he not only put up with my harmonic unconventionalities, but actually enjoyed them. Mr Darvell, however, was altogether a rare type of man, and the days I spent in the midst of his small but harmonious family will never fade from the screen of my memory. He was instrumental in getting some of my works a hearing at the Casino in Montreux, and also in persuading Mr Randegger to take an interest in them, which the latter not only did, but even went so far as to champion them in the face of great opposition at the Royal Academy where he taught. In addition to all this, Mr Darvell took my part in an

unfortunate matter which concerned the Lüthy's and myself, and which culminated in the breaking of our long friendship. Once again my heart in conjunction with Mr Lüthy's exquisitely pretty daughter had proved *plus fort que moi*, and her parents greatly feared a serious affair with a man of my non-jealous matrimonial views. They were thus uncomfortably suspended between the horns of a dilemma : their conventions would not permit them to countenance an affair which was not serious, their conception of me and my ideas would not permit them to countenance an affair that *was* serious ; so they requested me to see their daughter no more, and made it clear to me that I had behaved very badly and ungratefully, and that our friendship must be considered at an end. And they were quite right from their own standpoint, but as my father contended, such self-abnegation could not be expected of young people, although it was all very well in the abstract. Mr Darvell took the same stand ; there were interviews and letters, but to no purpose ; I was never to be forgiven. But I think that in any case sooner or later we must have drifted apart, for the music which at one time had filled Mr Lüthy with such ambitions for me, was becoming a little too much for his aging ears ; he could no longer follow, and thought I had strayed far from the path of musical righteousness. Be this as it may, I am sorry to have lost his friendship, and still more sorry to have caused him pain. . . . Soon I was also to lose Mr Darvell, who died not many years afterwards ; but before this sad event, with characteristic breadth of mind and generosity he said : " The great thing you have done for me is to convince me in my old age that religion is scientific."

It was while staying with the Darvell family at Clarens that I made the acquaintance of Stravinsky, and spent a long evening with him at his apartment. His reception of me was most cordial, and his appreciation of such works of mine as he knew exceedingly

generous. It was not long before he took out the Piano Sonata and played me what he considered to be the best passages. " This is all very kind of you," I said at length, " but I would much rather hear something of yours." He then showed me part of the " Rossignol " on which he was at work ; also portions of the " Sacré du Printemps."

I found Stravinsky a genial soul, and without any discoverable trait of " side " or egotism, so offensive in an artist, especially in a great one, as he undoubtedly is. Even his appearance does not give the clue to anything unusual, and only when one scrutinises him closely with the eyes of a physiognomist does one obtain a glimpse of the real man.

Two or three years in succession I went to Zürich to see Fräulein Bader—the lady who at one time begged me not to shake hands with her—and to stay with some intimate friends of hers, Robert Kauffmann, a retired singer of continental reputation, and his wife. At their villa I met all the musical big-wigs, and also the most modern painters, Ammiett and others. One year I went on to Lucerne to visit a friend of the Darvell's, Mr S. H. March, correspondent for the *New York Herald*, and organist, in the summer, to the English church at Lucerne, and in the winter to the English church at Cannes. While staying in Lucerne, I remember meeting the ex-Queen of Portugal and playing to her one evening, she being, as March informed me, a musical enthusiast ; but, apart from the fact that she was very tall and very dark, I cannot recall many details of the interview.

" Marchie," as we nicknamed him, had a prepossessing and rather temperamental daughter whom I occasionally took for walks—not altogether, I think, with her mother's approval, though her father was not averse to these outings. One morning the March family and I went by train to a little place where there was a golf

course patronised by a large number of English people ; but as Miss March did not want to play, and I *couldn't* play, we set off for a ramble instead, with injunctions to be back in time for lunch. It was a superb autumn day, and discovering an unfrequented path by the side of a fairly wide torrent, we decided to take it and see what happened : for we were in hopes of finding a bridge or some means of getting to the other side, so that we might take a different road back. But our hopes were not to be realised ; the further we went, the wider grew the torrent, and nothing in the shape of a ford or bridge could we discover anywhere. Finally I said : " There are only two things we *can* do : one is to turn back on our tracks, which is very dull, the other is to wade the stream. What do *you* say ? "

" Let's wade it," was the answer.

In this torrent were little sandy islands, pebbly mounds, and large slippery stones round which the water rushed with such force that we needed our sticks to steady ourselves and to feel our way. My young friend had tied her boots together, put her stockings inside, and hung them round her neck, but finding them cumbersome, when she got midstream she unhooked them, and was just about to throw them on to the other bank when I shouted : " Stop—if you miss, they're a ' goner ' for certain ! " It was too late —she had flung them across, made a bad shot, and with consternation we saw them being swirled away down the stream, till in less than half a minute they had vanished altogether. " This is an awful business," I exclaimed.

" What a fool I was ! " she cried. " Mother'll be frightfully annoyed ; she only bought me those boots yesterday, and they're the most expensive pair I've ever had. What on earth's to be done ? I can't walk into that Club House like this."

" First, I'll have to buy you a pair at the village shop," I said ; " I hope to goodness there is such a

thing—secondly, we must get hold of your father and leave him to break the news. I don't know what your mother will say to *me*. The whole affair's most infernally awkward."

It must have been a very painful experience, walking barefoot two miles along a pebbly path ; but although my spirit was willing enough to carry her, the flesh was far too weak ; I am not a muscular man, and never have been. Fortunately, after some searching we discovered a little shop where we managed to buy a pair of brown boots of a sort—in fact, very *much* of a sort ; but even for these we were thankful, considering the figures we should otherwise have cut on entering that crowded Club House at lunch-time. As it was, we were lucky enough to find Marchie, *minus* Mrs March, outside, and to him we proceeded to relate our escapade. He laughed, as I knew he would do, much like a schoolboy who has just heard an excellent joke ; after which he managed to persuade his wife not to be *too* severe. . . . But that was, I think, my last *tête-à-tête* walk with Miss March : I never had the courage to propose another one.

That same autumn I travelled with the March family to Lake Como, where we stayed at Hotel Villa d'Este ; but although I greatly enjoyed being there, I was not altogether to be left in peace ; as soon as the guests discovered there was a composer amongst them, they pressed me every evening to play the piano. Now, for one thing, I am not so fond of performing as people may suppose ; for another, playing to Italians is particularly unpleasant. It is not that they make observations of a culinary nature, like the two proverbial old ladies, but throughout the performance they exclaim " *bellissimo*," and give vent to other appreciatory superlatives, most disturbing both to listeners and performer.

While I was at Villa d'Este a certain Count, whose name I will not mention, came all the way from

Bologna to invite me to stay with him and his wife for the week-end. But as I did not know the gentleman, I endeavoured to excuse myself on some plea or other. He was so pressing, however, implored me to do him the honour, saying he was such a great admirer of my works, that at last I felt constrained to accept his well-intentioned invitation. Yet never have I spent a more embarrassing week-end in my life! Once having got me down to his country estate, he played to me excerpts from what he termed the Great Italian Masterpieces, and not only played them by the hour, but sang them in a cracked voice full of emotion, by way of enhancing the effect. "Don't you think they are wonderful?" he asked me from time to time.

"To be quite candid," I answered, "I can't say that I do—in fact, I don't consider them serious music at all."

He looked at me incredulously. "Ah, but listen to this . . ." he went on, sad but undaunted.

And I *had* to listen—it was so loud—though I tried hard not to. Besides, politeness obliged me to stand over him all the time and turn the pages—I was not even allowed to sit in an easy chair.

Not long afterwards I heard that the Count considered me a *poseur*. "Nobody could *really* dislike Bellini and Donizetti," he maintained. True in one sense—yet it is possible to be bored to exasperation by them, just as it is possible to be bored by a brainless but good-natured old maid.

But that is not the only time I have been called a *poseur* in Italy. When in 1915 I stayed with my friends the G. P. Harbens, brother and sister-in-law to H. D., in their villa outside Florence, and incidentally obtained a glimpse of Florentine society, I evoked that unflattering appellation by refusing to play at a luncheon-party given by Contessa ——, well, once again I must be discreet. But prior to this party, I had already come to the conclusion that with the Italians

music was not an art but a vice ; they can no more keep away from the piano than inebriates can keep away from the whiskey-bottle. The Contessa X. afforded a typical example.

" Please do play to us, Signor Scott," she said.

" Madame," I replied, putting on my continental manners, " the excellence of your lunch has made it quite impossible."

" Ah—but that is absurd," she protested ; " look, the piano is waiting."

" It may seem absurd to *you*, Madame," I argued politely, " but I assure you it is a fact."

She then appealed to my friends. " Signora Harben, why will he not play ? Cannot *you* induce him to do so ? "

" I'm afraid not—when he doesn't feel like it," was the discouraging answer.

" *Molto curioso*," shrugged the Contessa, " but these are mere excuses. There is no such thing as a musician who does not feel like it." And she started pressing me again.

It was no good. I remained adamant ; my headache was just at that moment far too bad to think of playing, and this I briefly told her.

" Ah, you are simply a *poseur*," she exclaimed. " You are *wishing* to play very much all the time, but you think it *très chic* to refuse." She thereupon went straight to the piano and started strumming herself instead.

Nevertheless I did meet a good many serious music-lovers in Florence, and was greatly astonished to find a certain cult for my less popular works both there and in Milan. In fact, the Leonardo da Vinci Society requested me to give them an evening with my Sonata and other pieces, and in return they presented me with the medal of the Society.

Having once visited Italy, especially the Italian Lakes, I returned several years in succession. One

year I stayed at a little pension at Tremezzo with Beatrice and May Harrison and their mother—Beatrice having visited that paradisical spot for the purpose of taking a few "touching-up" lessons from Hugo Becker, who had a villa there. For my own part, I was glad to forget music for a while and turn to poetry instead. My nature happens to be such, that I find it impossible to take a complete rest and indulge in the arid business of doing nothing but enjoy myself; for me there seems only one pleasurable way of resting, and that is by changing my work: to do new work in new surroundings is the most ideal holiday I can imagine. Thus on Lago di Como I wrote most of the *Vales of Unity*, and a large part of my *Celestial Aftermath*, published in 1915 by Chatto & Windus. But in writing my poems I quite realised that I was only doing so for a small circle of friends, including Mr George Moore and the poet Gordon Bottomley, who once called on me to express his sympathy with my work. As Rosamund Marriott-Watson used to say: "Your poetry is too concentrated in meaning to appeal to an extensive public."

Maybe she was right; but the chief thing is that one obeys the urge within, leaving the result to the decrees of the Gods.

CHAPTER XXI

STARS—LITERARY AND OTHERWISE

THOSE few luxurious years immediately preceding the war, I spent a more social life than I had done previously, and in one sense have ever done since; and I think this was largely due to my friendship with Mrs Charles Hunter, which began at that time and which brought me into touch with a large number of people well known in the social, artistic, and political worlds. This remarkable woman, who calls to mind the celebrated French *salonnières*, has been nicknamed by bitter-tongued persons "Mrs Lion Hunter," but truly in her case it is more the lions who are glad to hunt the hunter than *vice versa*. To spend a week-end at her home in Essex is to receive an intellectual, I might almost say a spiritual, stimulus. Unlike her sister, Dame Ethel Smythe, Mrs Charles is calm, sober-viewed, sympathetic, and well-nigh regal in bearing; indeed it would be difficult for the uninitiated to discern the relationship between the two sisters. Yet my first meeting with Mrs Hunter, which we both recall with a certain amusement, was not altogether a fortunate one, for we obtained a false impression of each other, and had it not been for Percy Grainger, who almost insisted on our becoming better acquainted, I should have lost this very valuable friendship. It was he who took me to Hill Hall for that first visit, which was to be the forerunner of the numerous ones I have paid since.

At Mrs Hunter's I met that unique personality George Moore, and heard him deliver himself of

those inexhaustible caustic and *risqué* utterances so horrifying to squeamish people. He reminds me irresistibly of Sterne, and I should not be surprised to hear he was a reincarnation of the author of *Gulliver*. I can detect a similarity in the two styles, and told him of this one day, but only to provoke the reflection that he wished his own style were as good !

There is little George Moore likes better than strolling about, talking æsthetics to a sympathetic listener—unless it be to shock straight-laced people. " When I'm not actually writing," he once told me, " I could talk æsthetics from morning till night." And it is no vain boast ; though whether this term is always strictly applicable to his discourses is open to doubt. Sometimes we would go for walks, during which he would rehearse the prospective plot of his latest story or chapter, and I recollect him telling me at the time he was writing *The Brook Kerith* that he intended St Paul should murder Jesus at the end of the book. I pointed out, however, that such a climax suggested too forcibly the melodramatic, and finally—though I do not think my remark had anything to do with his decision—he altered it. I refrained from saying that such a solution as he originally proposed would only shock people on religious grounds, for I knew that to tell him this would be to ensure the very opposite of what I intended. He has, unfortunately, little patience with religious beliefs of any kind, and his ruthless dismissal, for instance, of Catholics as people " who believe that God can be turned into biscuits," obliges Mrs Hunter, when he is with her, to be very careful in the selection of her other guests. It is not that George Moore is unkind ; it is that he possesses the inestimable advantage—in one sense—of never having grown up. Even his appearance, though his hair is white, suggests the plump schoolboy—the schoolboy who likes to talk and to be *heard* talking.

Mr George Moore's literary admirations are very

restricted, and his attitude towards many contemporary authors is as ruthless as his attitude towards Catholics. Of Conrad's novels he said, unjustly but brilliantly, over the dinner-table: "They are the wreckage of Stevenson floating in the slops of Henry James. . . ." And having said it, he was so pleased with his *bon mot* that he repeated it more than once. Yet this was intended to be no tribute to Henry James, since the latter's work he does not even consider literature at all. Thomas Hardy is another of his bugbears, and during a whole hour's walk in the woods I have sometimes been treated to a disquisition on his plots, and why, in George Moore's opinion, they are so deplorable. On the other hand, one unexpectedly finds him enjoying a belated admiration for such a story as Hawthorne's *Blithedale Romance*, the merits of which he expatiated upon with untiring eloquence. But then G. M. will always present a puzzle to every person who does not dive deep into the psychology of stylists. His enemies, and even some of his friends, think to solve the whole problem by saying that G. M. likes to stand alone in the field, hence his condemnation of his contemporaries; but I venture to state the solution is not so easily and cynically to be found. As I wrote in my *Philosophy of Modernism*: "A man's style is composed of his admirations"; he is like an animal that selects certain foods and discards others, not because they are unpalatable or poisonous, but because instinct tells it that they are useless to the building of its body. Whereas Chopin, for example, took from Weber, he not only took nothing from Beethoven, but positively disliked him. Mr George Moore has nothing to select from Henry James, Hardy, and those others he caustically dismisses; the rest is explained by his Irish temperament. Indeed, in justice to him, even at the risk of appearing immodest myself, I may relate that after reading the proofs of my little book just mentioned, as he handed them back to me he said:

"My dear Scott—charming—admirable. There are things in that book I now realise I have wanted to say for years, and have not known how to say them."

Before John Sargent paid such long visits to America, he used frequently to be at Mrs Hunter's in company with our mutual friends, Jane and Wilfred de Glehn. Sir Thomas Beecham and Lady Cunard would also come for week-ends, and occasionally General Sir Ian Hamilton —a charming man—to whom I would be requested to play Wagner. He is, I believe, extremely fond of music, but treats it with an almost military breeziness, manifesting itself in such modes of greeting as: "Well, how's business?" or "I heard *that fellow Kreisler* play one of your pieces." It would be interesting to know how often leadership and love of music go hand in hand. Kitchener, apparently, was not musical, seeing that when I met him at Lord Charles Beresford's, I found him, while Miss Ilona Eibenschütz was beautifully playing "Scarlatti," hidden away in the anteroom: he was consuming whiskies and sodas with the door shut. I was, by the way, disappointed in his appearance, which was both eczematous and unimpressive. Military heroes should never be seen in mufti; it takes too much gilt off the heroic gingerbread.

Miss Viola Tree once came to Hill Hall while I was staying there, but I forgot to ask her whether she had ever heard or whether she remembered an amusing story of her childhood. She had been instructed on no account ever to mention the word "stomach." At a luncheon-party given by her mother she was allowed as a great treat to be present, but as she showed signs of becoming obstreperous, Lady Tree warned her that unless she behaved she would be sent to the nursery. The warning, however, had little effect, and finally she was banished. But she was not meekly going to depart without some attempt at retaliation; when she got as far as the door, she turned round,

shook her little fist at the guests, and shouted: "*Stomach* . . ." then fled upstairs. The instinct for dramatic effect had manifested itself even at that early age.

It was a curious piece of irony that I should be playing tennis at Mrs Hunter's with Prince and Princess Lichnowsky, the German Ambassador and his wife, a few weeks before the outbreak of war. I recollect them saying how much they loved England, and consequently, I was not astonished to hear later that they, especially the Princess, had been heartbroken at having to leave. They both struck me as unartificial and cultured people, quite devoid of any of the proverbial German pomp and ponderousness. Even at the Embassy itself, where I went to a musical evening, I noticed an absence of formality. Yet I felt no very great surprise when I heard that Lichnowsky, with all his good intentions, was an ineffectual ambassador, and hence had been blinded into thinking that England would not enter the war against Germany.

While I was still living in Queen's Road a friend had taken me to see Mrs C. W. Earle at Cobham, in her beautiful Surrey garden about which she had written her well-known "Pot-pourris." And as to meet this fascinating and original old lady once was to fall under her spell, I was glad to accept the frequent invitations she extended to me from that time onwards. She must have been well over seventy when I met her, but her measured emphatic voice could be heard throughout the house, and none of her faculties were impaired, least of all her mind. It would be difficult to discover a finer advertisement for a vegetarian *régime*; at sixty she had been crippled with rheumatism, but had completely cured herself by following the Haig diet, to which she had adhered ever since. Although age had made her in some ways captivatingly child-like, it had not made her child*ish*, as might be

realised from her pungent utterances about people and things. Yet, if humorously caustic, her love and sympathy for her fellow-humans was well-nigh unexampled; so was her breadth of mind; one could talk with her on any subject, however intimate or unconventional. Many were the stories she told me about the eminent people of her younger days, some of whom had been her own connections or relatives. "*Dear* Neville"—(Lord Lytton)—she said one evening, as we were looking over old photographs by the lamplight, "he had strange ideas, but a great heart: he believed in taking pity on all old maids."

"How do you mean—taking pity on them?" I asked.

"Why, making love to them, of course," she answered with good-natured impatience.

"And what did his wife say to that?" I inquired.

"She never knew. He always made it clear beforehand that if there was any danger of her being hurt—well, then—good-bye—finish. Poor things, he used to say, one has to do something for them!"

"He was a dispenser of an unusual form of charity, then?" I suggested.

She made a funny little grimace at me by way of answer, clenching her teeth rather like a monkey.

She was magnificently natural in every way, and never afraid to call things by their names; but when I could not refrain from laughing, she evinced impatient astonishment. "I really can't see why you should go off into peals of ribald laughter—*I* can't see anything to laugh at. . . ."

At Mrs Earle's week-end parties I used to meet Reginald M'Kenna, Sir Louis Mallet, elegant and bemonocled, who afterwards became ambassador in Constantinople, and the poet and writer Mr Edmond Holmes, whose books, then anonymously published, *The Creed of the Buddha* and *The Creed of Christ*, are such a valuable contribution to philosophical and

mystical literature. Occasionally an elderly, tentative, little man, Dr M——, would be invited ; and as the therapeutical methods he employed were those of Suggestion, I concluded he might know something about the mind-science of Yoga. But no—he had never heard of it ; and when I went on to explain some of its phenomena, he begged to remind me of the existence of Messrs Maskelyne and Cooke. What puzzled him was my phraseology : he had never before heard anyone refer to the *vibrations of the mind* ! Yet, as science teaches us that all is vibration, I was at a loss to understand his bewilderment, and told him so at some length. The next morning he took me aside and said : " I wish to apologise to you for my rudeness last night."

" I wasn't aware you *had* been rude," I replied, taken aback.

" My flippant remark about Maskelyne and Cooke—" he explained. " I didn't realise at first that you were so well up in your subject and took it so seriously."

" It's extremely nice of you to bother about it at all," I answered, " but please don't give it another thought."

The following evening we avoided serious discussions, and he regaled us instead with the peculiarities of some of his patients. It seems hardly credible, but one man came to him for suggestionistic treatment because he could not say half-a-dozen words without interspersing them with " kinky-linky." Another man had the *folie de doute* so badly that he felt compelled to descend several times in the night to make sure that he had bolted the front door. The curious thing about Dr. M—— himself was that, for a mind-doctor, he appeared to have no personal magnetism whatsoever.

At the time of which I write, Percy Grainger and his mother were living in an upper part in King's Road, Chelsea, but Percy's days were now so full that his intimate friends saw but little of him. When they

attempted to make an appointment, they usually received a disconcerting letter from *Mrs* Grainger informing them that Percy would be at liberty, say, from 4.20 to 4.40 on such-and-such a day, and that if they came they must be sure to be punctual. As this " how-do-you-do and good-bye " arrangement, however, savoured a little too much of a visit to the dentist, they frequently decided they would not come, and had to be content to see Percy in company with a crowd on Mrs Grainger's " At Home " days. I did, nevertheless, avail myself of one of these lightning appointments, and found my friend dressed in a most astonishing costume consisting of a blue and red shirt, very much open about the chest, and a pair of shorts made out of coarse, dark-coloured Turkish towels. Round his calves were twisted, very far apart, puttees of white linen, under which he wore neither socks nor stockings.

" Good Lord ! " I ejaculated as I entered, " is it football, Buffalo Bill, or a penance ? "

" Percy wanted something cool he could wear," Mrs Grainger explained, " so he got me to make him *that*."

One hears that Wagner was very fond of dressing-up in queer costumes—is this a peculiarity of composers, I wonder ?

Which brings to my mind, since I am on the subject of Grainger *and* eccentricities, that when Greig came to London and stayed with the Speyers, they asked him if there was anybody special he wished to meet.

" I should like to meet the young man Grainger who writes choruses," was the reply.

Accordingly, Percy was produced, and a very strong sympathy came into being between the two men. But I afterwards heard from Percy that Sir Edgar and Lady S. found the old man a distinctly eccentric guest ; he would spend most of his time sitting in the hall—*with his hat on*.

At Sir Edgar's I had my first interview with Richard

Strauss, when he came over to conduct *Electra*. It had been suggested that I should show him some of my scores with a view to his performing them in Germany; but although he professed himself interested, and in so far the interview was a success, in other respects it proved disappointing. I had greatly admired Strauss, and had anticipated being impressed by his personality; so that to be greeted, as I was, with lamentations over the disturbed state of his stomach, acted as a piece of iconoclasm for which I had not come prepared. Although aware that the national malady in England is *liver*, in France *migraine*, and in Germany "spoiled stomach," I had associated Strauss with more artistic things. Nor did my second meeting with him, when Sir Edgar gave an evening devoted to his works, altogether dispel the unfavourable impression. This time Strauss himself was well enough, but his compositions were deplorably seedy; he had unearthed some work—Opus 2, I think—of which one could but say that it had far better have been left in its grave, or rather in its cradle. Moreover, a day or two later I was to hear the *Josefslegende*, which did not add to my admiration for him, considering what a descent from whilom inspirational heights it proved to be. As Vienna's leading critic wrote: "It says in the Bible that the Lord was with Joseph—yes, but unfortunately, not with the *Josefslegende*." But then, as Strauss admitted to Lady Speyer that *one day* he intended to write as *he* wished, the inference must be drawn that his monetary and musical aspirations were pulling in opposite directions. To what lofty ethers he will soar when freed from the considerational ballast of an unnecessarily heavy purse, remains to be seen. But even then I, for one, hope that his predilection for Mozart will not compel him to help himself more and more freely to those well-defined melodies which bear so close a resemblance to that all too-melodious composer. Mozart has practically been the

ruin of Tschaikowsky: will he prove the ruin of Strauss also? Time can but show.

Around this time I made the acquaintance of Miss Elizabeth Asquith, now Princess Bibesco. She was only sixteen when I met her at Bernard Shaw's, but talked and looked like a girl of over twenty, though she always retained a fascinating suspicion of the *gamine*. It was through her that I came to be present at a very amusing garden-party at 10 Downing Street—or I should rather say that the party became amusing after most of the guests had departed. A young Russian named Votichenka had asked if he might perform to the assembly on a queer-looking instrument not unlike a cembalo, but as it was thought that the majority of the guests might not feel inclined for music, Mrs Asquith suggested he should play to a chosen few after the remainder had gone home. He had established his instrument on a little platform in the drawing-room, and about eight people had been invited to go upstairs to hear him. I had already met him several times in the company of a Russian princess who, during the war, was requested to leave the country, and he had always struck me as a very *precious* young man. But I had never heard him perform; and when at the Prime Minister's he began, like Maud Allan, to wave and gyrate his arms prior to striking a note with his two hammers which, in the dim light, looked like tooth-brushes, the effect was disconcertingly comic. So much so, that Elizabeth Asquith, with whom I was sitting, began to giggle; and I was prevented from forming any idea of the actual music by my preoccupation with attempts to keep my own gravity. I merely have a recollection of Mrs Asquith dancing about the room to the rhythm of her own humming, while Mr Votichenka rested between his pieces. His music had at any rate moved *her* to dance and song, whatever else it may not have done.

Elizabeth Asquith I used also to see at Lady Cunard's salon, which was an especial meeting-place at that time for artists, politicians, and writers. Mr Asquith, Lord Curzon, and Mr Arthur Balfour were often among the political guests, and I learned, as I played there one evening, that Mr—now Lord Balfour—was a devotee of music. This soft-speaking, courtly old gentleman entertained a particular fondness for Händel ; a fondness, however, which to my surprise did not prevent him from making sympathetic remarks about " us moderns." Yet it was not only male celebrities whom one saw at Lady Cunard's ; beautiful women being an essential decoration to effective parties, Lady Mary Curzon was often present, also the famous

> Lady Diana Manners
> Who is very fond of leaning over " pianners,"
> And encouraging with praise
> *Any*one who plays.

For, having observed her on many occasions, I could not resist the temptation to invent this jingle. True, I never sought to enrol myself as a member of that circle of which Lady Diana was, one might almost say, the honorary president ; and thus I did not constitute one of the sixteen favoured men who organised a supper-party (at which she was the only woman present) to commemorate the occasion of her reappearance after a protracted illness. This is no anti-compliment to Lady Diana ; I was not asked to join that party, and only heard of it after it was over.

Soon, unfortunately, all feasting was temporarily to come to an end, and through the " fat pastures of high society," and all society, for that matter, the herald of war was to stalk with his horrible fanfare.

CHAPTER XXII

UNCHRISTIAN CHRISTIANITY

When war descended upon us, I was staying with my parents at Oxton, and I remember my first feeling was one of an overwhelming compassion for all concerned. Of hatred for the enemy, I felt none ; indeed, ever since I had experienced those spiritual states of consciousness already mentioned, that unpleasant emotion had left me, it would seem, for always ; I had tasted the delights of an unconditional love, after which hatred appeared as something essentially fatuous and childish. So in one sense did the whole war : a very brutal childishness, it is true, but childishness nevertheless ; a species of nursery behaviour on a gigantic scale.

Though my parents took it calmly and did not give vent to useless tirades against the Germans and the Kaiser, I felt intensely sorry for them. That their old age should be disturbed by a catastrophe of this kind was a saddening and disquieting thought, especially as my father did not seem at all sanguine as to the final upshot. "That German thoroughness," he said, "is a very formidable weapon, and I have my doubts if we shall bungle through." He was also worried about his stocks and shares and his shipping interests, and not without reason, as things transpired, for in the end he lost a lot of money through the submarine warfare.

From Oxton I went down to stay at Billesley, Warwick, with Mrs Burton-Tate, formerly Ida Legge ; her mother, Mrs Robin Legge, was also there and several

THE LAURELS, OXTON, CHESHIRE
WHERE THE AUTHOR SPENT HIS CHILDHOOD

other guests including a Miss Burden-Muller, whose attractions did not fail to give an added charm to the already romantic surroundings. Although Mrs Legge and her daughter indulged in no jingoism and did not expect me to express any violent hatred, I contrived to make myself not over popular with some of the guests, because I argued that the Kaiser was probably a pawn in the hands of others rather than the actual instigator of the war. And I have reason to think I was right ; for some of my German friends have since told me that, far from wishing the war, he dashed the pen into the corner of the room after being forced to sign the fatal document.

On leaving Billesley I went to stay with H. D. Harben and his wife at their estate in Buckinghamshire, and found the former even less sanguine than my father. He was convinced that Germany must win, and that before long we should be having Zeppelins over London. His wife and I, however, did not share his views—at any rate those which presaged defeat for the Allies. Personally, almost from the beginning I had little doubt as to the final issue, for I had obtained certain information from my theosophical and psychic friends which set my mind at rest on that score. Mr Sinnett already, as early as 1911, had been lecturing on the coming war, and though he made a mistake in connection with its actual duration, in other respects he proved correct. From the standpoint of the Higher Powers, those unseen Rulers of Man's destiny, Germany would not be permitted to win, for at the back of its Welt-Kultur was the selfish love of domination—the leaders of the German people, not the unfortunate Germans themselves, were working against the Divine Will, instead of *with* It. Even my publisher, Herr Strecker, sensed something of this when he observed to me shortly after war was declared : " It sounds an unpatriotic thing for *me* to say, but it would never do for Germany to win ; it would get

such a swelled head that it would become simply unbearable."

As time went on and I saw more of my acquaintances after the catastrophic change, it was brought home to me how many of them had temporarily mislaid their sanity. Over and over again I found myself unwillingly listening to long rigmaroles about lights and windows and blinds and secret wireless installations. And the amusing part was that when I tried to pacify these rather hysterical people, and to convince them that their fears were groundless, instead of being pacified they became indignant, and dropped hints to the effect that I had, strange logic, pro-German tendencies. There is a prevalent notion that it is we poor artists who are hysterical, but really I began to find my lack of that mental malady a trifle embarrassing at times. I was not even swept up in the general desire to go and " have a pot at those damned Germans," as the phrase ran ; for the idea of " sticking a bayonet into another fellow's tummy," was not one which commended itself to me. Not that I was a Conscientious Objector—as a matter of fact I attested, and was none too politely told by the doctor that I was quite useless for military purposes—but seeing the Fates decreed I was to stay at home, I did not exactly weep over it, or pretend to. It seemed to me that every man should do the thing for which he was best fitted, and as I, poor miserable creature, was only born with enough muscular strength to play the piano, play it I did—to obtain money for war-charities. Of course I came in for a little mild persecution on the part of misguided people who wanted to bundle every man off to the Front, whether fit or not—quite overlooking the futility and expense to the Government of such a procedure—but their persecutions left me cold. I did not lament like a man I knew who said : " I wish to God they would take me ; I feel such an ass walking along the street in mufti ; what must people think ? "

" If that is all that's troubling you," was my attempt

at consolation, " I shouldn't worry. I happen to be in the same boat myself. The way to acquire indifference to other people's opinions is to be a composer : the critics will soon teach you ! " But I fear he was not consoled—vanity is not eradicated in a day.

Indeed, one began to learn many unsuspected truths about human nature and the workings of the subconscious mind. I found it most surprising how suddenly some of my more pious church-going friends disregarded *in toto* the very first principles of Christianity. It was not, I noticed, that they merely failed to live up to those principles, but with some curious twist of logic, that they did not even think they ought to *try* and live up to them. I could understand caustic and full-blooded old buccaneers hurling invectives at the Germans and the Kaiser from their club-room armchairs, but when it came to the mildest, sweetest, and most devout old ladies, who could hardly mention the Deity without shedding a tear, behaving in that fashion, the effect was novel and startling. And because I did not join in the chorus, or worse still, because I gently suggested that the foremost of Christian precepts was " *Love your enemies*," or at least don't spend all your time in hating them, I was once again considered pro-German. I had always looked upon the absence of hatred in one's composition as an insignificant but rather useful virtue, and now, though in one sense it was awkward, I would certainly not have liked to change places with any of these hard-hating folk ; it often struck me how uncomfortable they must be ! Surely when the Great Sages of all religions talked of " being saved," they meant " saved " in this life every bit as much as in a future one ; in fact, *one* must be the outcome of the *other* ; yet how can a person feel peaceful, spiritually speaking, so long as he is tormented by the unpleasant sensations of various turbulent emotions ?

I remember once saying to the poetess Mrs Alice

Meynell, who was an ardent Roman Catholic: "If religion doesn't make one happy, then there is either something wrong with it, or something wrong with one's own interpretation of it." But she did not agree with me at all. "The object of religion," she said with gloomy hauteur, "is certainly not to make one happy." I was squashed and said no more; but her view seemed to me rather an unflattering reflection on the Deity all the same—that is, if one admits that it was He who put religion into the world.

With men, I did not always allow myself to be suppressed so easily; for I enjoy a good argument when in the mood and my head is not too bad. It was just the time of Dr Lyttelton's sermon in which he had ventured to expatiate upon the *love your enemies* text. There was, indeed, a fine outcry, and I chanced to be in the company of a man who joined in the general indignation. But I felt constrained to stand up for Dr Lyttelton; as far as I could see, he was the only preacher who stuck to his guns and did not modify his Leader's teachings because the chief of them proved inconvenient at the moment.

"Most mistaken policy, most unwise sermon," my opponent declared.

"Then you don't consider that a Christian preacher ought even to *preach* Christ at present?" I asked with a twinkle, "you think he ought to deny Him like Peter?"

"Who said anything about denying Him?"

"*I* did," was my laughing rejoinder, "surely you can't separate Him from His teachings: in being false to those teachings, you are being false to Him."

My opponent was not pleased with this remark and did not know how to deal with it. He shrugged his shoulders and appealed to his neighbour. "What do *you* say?"

"The whole problem is so very difficult," was the non-committal answer.

" It seems to me," I suggested, " it's so easy that people have to make it difficult in order to have an excuse to ignore the obvious solution."

" What's that got to do with Dr Lyttelton ? " demanded the first man, knowing perfectly well.

" Why, this—if Lyttelton had preached like that in peace-time, everybody would have said what a trite and obvious sermon—(Heaven knows it's easy enough to love your enemies when there are no enemies to love !)—but because he preached it in war-time, people are scandalised."

" But if we were really to love our enemies," tentatively remarked a young lady, " nobody would go out and fight them. Surely one *must* hate them to be able to carry on the war."

" Not necessarily," I pointed out ; " the sportsman who goes big-game shooting doesn't actually hate the tiger, though he knows perfectly well that either he must kill the tiger or the tiger will kill him. Hatred needn't come into it at all. You might even go a step further : a man may love his dog, but if that dog goes mad, he'll have it destroyed all right—it's his duty to the dog and to his neighbours."

" I hadn't thought of that . . ." she answered.

I found myself landed in similar discussions after the appearance of Shaw's preface to *Androcles and the Lion*, in which he maintained that nobody had tried Christ's way as yet. Not only did I agree with him, but as I knew him well, was perfectly assured that he meant every word he wrote and was not making a joke, as his critics averred. After all, practically no one *has* tried Christ's way ;[1] for whatever one may think of Churchianity, as Swami Abhedananda used to call it, it bears with its intricate machinery of pomp and circumstance, its Popes, Bishops, Canons, together with

[1] The " Gentleman with the Duster " has made some very significant remarks in his admirable book *Painted Windows*, published by Messrs Mills & Boon.

its theological hair- and brain-splittings, no resemblance to the philosophy, life, and example of the gentle wandering Sanyasin, Jesus of Nazareth. And this one realised more than ever as the war progressed. Here was this ordeal, this portentous examination, so to speak, of all Christians, which was to prove how much they had learnt within the last two thousand years, and yet when it came to the point, one perceived that they had learnt nothing: they had merely been *taught*. And the golden opportunity having arrived to put teaching into practice, only one out of a thousand so much as tried, let alone succeeded. It was a curious *dénouement*, and many strange anti-Christian things happened even to my own personal acquaintances.

Leaving aside such flagrant examples of people whose misleading appearance caused them to be spat at in the street, there was a case, amusing in its irony, which I may mention even in these far-off days when the whole desolating business with its fantastic excitements and all its minor follies is a nightmare of the past. It was that of a man I know, who, with the object of going into the letter-censoring department, was studying a German Grammar in the train, and was grossly insulted, even though one might have thought that Germans as a rule, and spies in particular, did not need to study their own language!

Still, people will do many absurd things in the heat of the moment; it is the cold-blooded cruelties which show such a complete disregard of Christian principles. That one of the three large institutes of musical education in London should have adopted the policy of dismissing its German professors in the manner it did, struck me as almost incredible. A friend of mine, with a Canadian wife, who had taught at the institute in question for fifteen or twenty years, was handed his dismissal by the hall porter when about to enter the building on his return from the holidays!

In view of all the foregoing, I cannot help smiling

at the optimism of that little band of people who deem the Second Coming, or the advent of the World Teacher, is fairly close at hand. For how can He give mankind a new lesson, when it has not even begun to learn the lesson He gave two thousand years ago ?

During the early part of the war I stayed with Mr and Mrs Bernard Shaw as their guest at a hotel in Torquay. I had often lunched with G. B. S. at his flat in Adelphi Terrace, but only when in his company every day for a fortnight did I come into close touch with the *heart* of this remarkable man. People imagine him to be a *farceur*, but they are entirely mistaken ; he merely adopts that attitude because he dare not do otherwise. " If I appeared to be as serious as I really am," he confided to me, " I could never get my message across at all." And considering how the English are constituted, what he said, I feel convinced, is true. In the olden days the alchemists had to hide their meaning in fantastic symbols which only the initiated could understand ; for, of course, the powdered frogs and other absurdities which one finds in ancient prescriptions were merely blinds to save their writers from the stake. Nowadays things have improved just a little ; one can put forward almost any startling moral unconventionality so long as one leaves a loophole through which the recipient may escape : he can always think it *may* be a joke. To understand this is to understand Bernard Shaw—he is an earnest jester. But his jests nevertheless do not include those ill-bred actions which some of his enemies have libellously ascribed to him, such as his appearing at the opera in a dress suit and a Jaeger shirt. He may, like the Kaiser, occasionally send undiplomatic telegrams to people whom he credits with as much sense of humour as he has himself ; but these are always followed by friendly and explanatory letters, which are, however,

conveniently forgotten by those who circulate the stories.

There are other prevalent illusions about Bernard Shaw—one is that he is conceited ; but this again has no foundation in truth, the absence of all " side " in his manner being a feature particularly noticeable from the first moment of meeting him. Indeed this was borne out by a little *contretemps* which happened at Torquay. We had been invited to dine one evening with some friends of his, and after dinner G. B. S. had promised to entertain us with his latest piece of work. He had just started to read when suddenly he stopped and said : " I shall have to go back to the hotel for a moment—I've left part of my teeth behind. . . . "

Such naturalness seems hardly compatible with " side."

I discovered also that by nature he was pre-eminently forethoughtful. As many Americans had asked me why he had never crossed the Atlantic, I put the question to him once when we were out for a walk. His answer was characteristic. " They offered me £500 to give a lecture in Carnegie Hall, but really I didn't see how they could make it pay, so I refused. I should very much dislike anyone to be out of pocket on my account. . . . " I shared his sentiments, but not his opinion.

Our days in Torquay were enjoyably spent. Shaw would usually retire to the roof garden in the morning and work till noon, then go for a swim before lunch, after which he would sometimes work again, this time in our own sitting-room, even while Mrs Shaw and I were conversing. I noticed that he wrote everything in shorthand, and envied him his facility—if only there existed a shorthand for music ! Sometimes we would take a motor-run in the afternoon ; and I remember on one occasion paying a visit to Galsworthy in his house on Dartmoor, where in his company we also found William Archer. During a ramble we all took together,

amid showers of drenching rain, I gained a more personal insight into Galsworthy's humanitarianism ; and as I look back, in view of a little episode my wife has since related to me, I am more than ever struck by the eternal irony of the prophet in his own country. My wife, who chanced to be staying one summer at North Bovey, had taken a drive with a rather weather-beaten spinster—one of the local residents—and had passed the outskirts of Galsworthy's habitation. Being a fervent admirer of his works, she regaled the old lady with quite a panegyric on the subject, which, much to her surprise, met with a very chilly reception.

" In our set," remarked the self-righteous dame, drawing herself up, " we never mention Mr Galsworthy : as a matter of fact, we consider him a bad influence in the neighbourhood."

At our hotel in Torquay Shaw and I were looked upon, each in our own way, as eccentrics. There used to be amateur concerts in the evening, which we did *not* attend ; but on one occasion I happened to enter the hall door when a young woman was playing Debussy, so I stood for a while to listen. The next morning as I was writing letters in a recess, I overheard one woman saying to another : " The ' Freak ' seemed quite to enjoy the Debussy last night." As I did not wish to embarrass them, I remained in my hiding-place longer than I had intended, but since they showed no signs of moving, I finally emerged. They looked at one another. . . .

That summer Horatio Bottomley came to Torquay to lecture on the war ; and rather to my surprise G. B. S. proposed going to hear him. " Oh, just out of curiosity," he explained. When he returned, he said : " It's exactly what I expected : the man gets his popularity by telling people with sufficient bombast just what they think themselves and therefore want to hear."

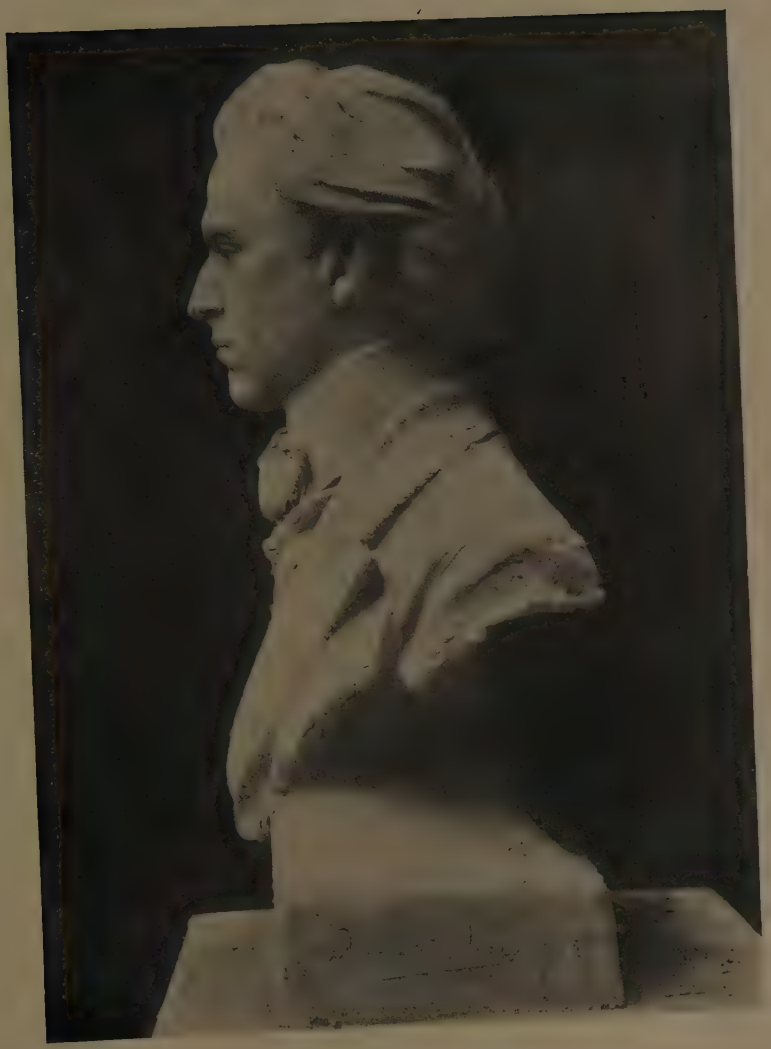
" I have to lecture myself very soon," I remarked, " can you give me any hints ? "

" Start by making a joke," was the answer, " so as to put the audience in a good temper. I always find it pays."

Whether it is generally known that Shaw was at one time a musical critic, I cannot say ; but such is the case. Fortunately, however, he did not remain one, for his musical assertions are occasionally of a dubious nature. " You are the only composer of the younger generation," he once informed me over the luncheon table, " in whom I can detect a style." A flattering reflection for *me*, I gratefully admit ; yet hardly true, for Stravinsky, Grainger, and Scriabine, undoubtedly have styles, and they all belong to my own generation. But perhaps, if the truth be known, these gentlemen are a trifle beyond Shaw's pianistic capabilities, as they are beyond most people's.

" G. B. S. spends most of his free evenings playing your things," Mrs Shaw declared, " he *can* play *them*. . . ."

I do not wish to pose as a literary critic, but in some ways I consider *Captain Brassbound's Conversion* the most inspired of all Shaw's plays, though I doubt whether its full significance is understood by those who read it. We have always been taught to look upon revenge with its numerous variations, major and minor, as wicked and un-Christian : Bernard Shaw in this play conveys the message that it is childish and silly, and just by showing it up in this particular light does he make so powerful an appeal. For human beings are so constituted that with all their prayers and penances they do not fundamentally object to thinking themselves sinful, whereas they very much object to thinking themselves childish—it offends their vanity. Of course most readers of *Captain Brassbound* will pat themselves on the back and say : " Well, at any rate



BUST OF THE AUTHOR
(AGED 22) BY DERWENT WOOD

vindictiveness is not one of *my* vices " ; but for Shaw the point is that *all* vices are childish [1]—they are infinitely more bother than they are worth. Even if he had merely written this one play, he would have done an incalculable service to mankind : whether it be accepted or not is another matter.

[1] See a book called *The Way of the Childish*, by Shri Advaitacharya.

CHAPTER XXIII

MORE PERSONALITIES

DURING those four years of the war, although I travelled much in England, I only went abroad once to Florence in 1914–15, as already mentioned; but on my way home I stopped at Geneva to see some very dear German friends, the violinist Professor Hugo Heermann and his family, who used to live in Frankfurt and were then living in Switzerland. Judging by the warmth of our friendship there might have been no hostilities between our respective nations. Indeed, we discussed the matter quite dispassionately, and I was interested to learn that while we in England heard so much of German acts of atrocity, they in Germany heard of similar English, French, and Russian ones! As to the Hymn of Hate, my friends were ignorant of its existence; which only goes to prove that these exaggerations in all countries concerned were merely devices to stimulate recruiting. While in Geneva I was tentatively approached with the view to discovering whether I would accept the post of conductor and also of director of the Conservatoire in place of Stavenhagen, who had just died. But I felt that to bury myself in Geneva away from all my English friends, especially at such a time, was not to be thought of, so I declined. Although I have conducted my own works many times, I have only once conducted a mixed programme—at Bath, in the time of Max Heymann (poor fellow, he committed suicide)—and then I apparently worked the orchestra so hard that the perspiration poured off them, and Heymann scolded

me afterwards in consequence. As for becoming a director, I am neither imposing nor severe enough, and would, I feel sure, be utterly ineffectual in such a position : love of power not being one of my vices !

On my return to England I pursued my war-charity-concert activities ; wrote *La Belle Dame sans Merci* for chorus and orchestra ; a string quintet, still unpublished ; a string quartet, published ; and many songs and piano pieces. But owing to the generally disturbed mental atmosphere, composing proved up-hill work, and I had often to turn to literature for relaxation. Along that line I wrote two *libretti*, and several anonymous books on occult philosophy. Of the *libretti*, one, *The Alchemist*, I have already set to music, the other I propose to set later. Yet, even so, I could only keep at my work with the aid of Mr Foster and Dr Grantham Browne, as not only were my headaches unusually bad, but I had other complaints due, I think, to war-foods.

Which reminds me that through Dr Browne I came to have a very entertaining cheiromantic experience. He asked me as an act of charity to call on a certain palmist who, like many others of her kind, was, owing to "D.O.R.A.," in low water ; so without making an appointment or giving my name, I visited this woman and asked her to read my hands.

"The first thing I see about you," she said, "is that you are an inventor—but wait a moment—there is also a strong element of the artistic—not the mechanic. I also see the musical and literary—dear me, this is a very extraordinary hand—you must be either a musician or a poet, or both. Whatever you are, you follow no cut-and-dried methods, you invent new ones."

"I happen to be a musician," I conceded, "you are quite right so far, it *is* true—also that I write poetry. . . ."

"Well, don't tell me any more," she interrupted, "it makes the reading harder. . . . I'm glad you're a musician. I love music—especially classical music.

My daughter plays the violin. . . . " She then went on to tell me a number of more or less accurate things about my character ; and finally she said : " I now want to sound a note of warning—I see such high inspiration marked in your hand : please, please do not allow yourself to be led astray, like these hideous modern composers Albert Mallinson or Cyril Scott ! "

I gave no sign, and promised her I would try and be true to myself ; then departed, very well pleased with the interview. Indeed, I consider this anecdote cheap at five shillings, seeing how useful I have found it while lecturing to people who required a little risible stimulant.

As the war progressed and conditions in London became more and more uncomfortable, an old friend of mine, Miss Soutter, whom I had first met at the time of my abortive attempts to start a Vedanta Society, took various country houses in succession, at which she generously invited me to stay and work quietly, away from the noise and alarms of town ; and these visits not only proved peaceful but very enjoyable. Among her most frequent guests were Hilda Cowham, well known for her highly individual drawings of children —though I regret she does not allow the public to see some of her more serious work—and Herbert Fryer, one of the wittiest musicians I know. Miss Soutter, by the way, was very fond of parrots (as of all animals, for that matter), and commissioned me to buy her one at a shop in Liverpool where I went to visit my parents. I accordingly selected a bird which I was told had good points, but as I was not returning immediately to Miss Soutter, but going to stay at Glastonbury for a fortnight, I took it with me on my travels. The bird had not been in my charge for many days before I noticed there was something amiss, and as no bird-fancier was to be found in the vicinity, I felt at a loss what to do. Miss Soutter already had three parrots, and consequently had some knowledge of them, so at length I

thought the only thing for it was to wire her for instructions. Thus I wrote out a telegram: "*Parrot constipated what shall I do?*" but when it came to handing it in to the rather pretty girl at the counter, I funked it, and bought some stamps instead. Whether my lack of moral courage was responsible for the subsequent ill-condition of the parrot, I can't say; but it contracted a habit of pulling out its feathers, and the last time I saw the unfortunate little bird, it was as naked as a plucked fowl. Shortly afterwards, much to my sorrow—for I am very fond of parrots—it had a fit and died. In future I shall be very chary of buying animals for my friends.

Miss Soutter always declared that she liked animals better than humans, but her actions certainly belied her words; for never have I encountered a woman so lavish with gifts—it was impossible to stem the tide of her generosity, and among the numerous presents she gave me are two Burne-Jones windows which were formerly in Mr Haweis' church in Marylebone before it was pulled down. . . . Which reminds me that when I first came to London I had an introduction to that eccentric clergyman from the Rev. Dr John Watson of Liverpool. But although I wrote asking for an interview, the only response I got was a torn bit of paper on which was written that Mr Haweis had been ill, and that as a rule he did not reply to correspondents unless a stamped envelope was enclosed! I think, however, that with the egotism of youth I had written him far too long a letter—about myself and my aims—so that on the whole this "slap in the face" did me a good service. It taught me to be brief in my dealings with all people with whom I was not personally acquainted.

Towards the end of the war, Harlech became a meeting-place for musicians in the summer months. I had some very dear friends, Alvin Langdon Coburn, the American photographer, and his wife, who spent a

great part of the year there, and invited me to stay with them. Granville Bantock, Eugene Goossens, Joseph Holbrooke, and Miss Astra Desmond, also came down; and finally Miss Margaret Morris with her entire dancing-school: thus the quiet village of Harlech became a transformed place, and the pious Sabbatarian villagers were to witness all manner of profanities. Though I had met both Goossens and Bantock before, it is to the Harlech days that I owe the cementing of our friendship, and for that reason I do not think so unkindly of its unmentionable climate. What, indeed, we should have done without George Davison and his hall and organ, and unlimited hospitality, is best not contemplated; as it was we contrived to ignore the weeping skies and to drown the howling of the wind by improvising Russian opera, with Bertram Binyon as tenor and myself as soprano, for if the truth be told, I possess a very loud if rather harsh falsetto voice! There *were* days when even to venture as far as the hall was a perilous undertaking necessitating either wading-boots or a raft; on such days we played four-handed chess, or six-handed, and on one occasion even eight-handed. And what a brain-splitting occupation; not for a moment to be confounded with a consultation game, but one which requires four, six, or eight sets of men, as the case may be, and an enormous board. When we played that eight-handed game, we started at 9 p.m. and ended at 3 a.m.—and this was called a holiday! It is, says Mr Chesterton, not poets and musicians who go mad, but logicians and chess-players; the musician tries to get his head into heaven, and succeeds; the logician tries to get heaven into his head, and it splits: yes, but what about those who try to do both, as, according to this, *we* did?

It was while at Harlech that I became better acquainted with Joseph Holbrooke. One summer I had broken my journey at Chirk with Lord and Lady Howard de Walden; and Holbrooke, who was a

fellow-guest, had motored me over. But I can't say, though I hope he will pardon me, that I enjoyed that drive : he was so engaged in pointing out the scenic beauties that he forgot to keep his eye on the road, and hence my heart was not always where it should have been.

Previous to the Harlech days, I had only known Holbrooke in theory—from his thousand and one vexatious letters to the papers ; but when I came to hear him talk, I found an entirely different personality from what I had expected. Like that of Mr Jarndyce, his vexatiousness, if continuous, is humorously good-natured ; he is an evening's entertainment—but only to be had with difficulty, for he never arrives when he says he will. If Holbrooke were to go on the Halls and merely grumble about the way British composers are treated in this country—he has hardly any other subject of conversation—his fortune would be assured. Unlike people who say the right thing at the wrong time, Holbrooke always says the wrong thing at the right time, hence his drolleries. " My dear chap," he declared one day while we were having a smoke, and I was depreciating my songs as necessary evils, " if I could write songs like yours, I'd feel so damn bucked, I'd be smoking a cigar in each mouth and doing God knows what ! " As I imagined this, though a compliment, was also a veiled hint that he wanted a second cigar, I of course gave him one—but he is so absent-minded that he forgot to take it with him when he left, at one o'clock in the morning. In fact, he has no idea of time, and while I was living in Queen's Road, but had gone away for a night, my friend Mr Shand was hauled out of bed by a telephone call from him at that very hour : he wanted to know if I had a new work he could include in one of his concert programmes. . . .

It was, perhaps, such samples of tactlessness on Holbrooke's part which caused Lord Howard de Walden to make the curious remark : " I am genuinely attached

to Joseph—he is the only person who can still annoy me."

Being, like myself, medically unfit, Holbrooke devoted part of his time to the musical education of Tommies—an education which he did not consider complete without a knowledge of his own works. At one concert, on entering which each Tommy was handed a bun and a banana, he treated them to a performance of his latest string quartet ; but owing to some hitch, the players who were originally to have performed it were unable to do so, and Holbrooke had to engage others. Before the concert began, he appeared on the platform and made a little speech in which he pointed this out, and concluded by saying : " So I warn you, you're in for a very scratch performance—however, as most of you have been in the trenches and have managed to stand *that*, I suppose you can pretty well stand anything ! " The players listening in the ante-room were *not* amused. . . .

As George Davison used twice a week to give free concerts to the Harlech villagers, we would frequently assist ; Miss Desmond would sing, Coburn would play the pianola, and either Goossens or I would improvise on the organ. When there were no concerts, one or other of us used to play fox-trots so that members of the Margaret Morris school might dance ; and occasionally visitors from the St David's Hotel would come to look on. One evening, after I had just played a waltz and was strolling back to my seat, a very tall, gaunt woman addressed me.

" You're Mr Cyril Scott, aren't you ? "

" That *is* my name," I replied, bowing.

" Come and sit down by me," she went on, " I want to talk to you—*about music*."

" Any subject but that," I besought, fearing the worst.

But she paid no attention, and treated me to her

musical views, which included those on my own works. She informed me, among other things, that she had insisted that one of my compositions—I think "Vesperale"—should be performed at her wedding. "It is a pity," she added with embarrassing candour, "that your later works are not up to the same standard."

Not knowing what to answer, I took refuge in another bow.

"You see, I am very musical," she explained, "I come of a very musical stock; my ancestors for generations were intensely musical; I might even go so far as to say I was *born* at the piano."

"Indeed," I said, pitying her mother *and* the piano.

"Oh, yes," she smiled reminiscently, "we certainly have had music in our blood for centuries. . . . By the way, I understand you are interested in occultism?"

"That is true," I admitted.

"Have you any psychic powers?"

"I think all artists are psychically inclined," was my non-committal answer.

"I can see for hundreds of miles," she told me. "Now *that* is the real thing, isn't it?"

As it happens to be contrary to occult etiquette ever to boast of one's faculties, I merely smiled and was silent. Altogether I was finding the interview rather asphyxiating, and thought it about time I played another waltz. But she did not allow me this method of escape, and followed me.

"Would you like me to tell you what I see for you?" she asked, leaning over the piano while I played.

"I shall be charmed," I said politely.

"A woman named Gertrude will enter your life," she "saw."

"That is useful," I conceded, thinking otherwise. "But in what capacity?"

"Ah, that I cannot tell you, but I see her in a green dress."

I don't happen to care for green, so did not find the information very thrilling. " Well, will she be a friend or an enemy ? " I persisted.

" She might be either—— "

" But in that case, what is the use of my knowing this much beforehand ? If an enemy—— "

" Ah, if an enemy," she interrupted with enthusiasm, " it would be so good for you—discipline, you know, discipline ! "

But by this time my friends had been perspicacious enough to realise my predicament, and had come to my rescue.

I already knew at least three Gertrudes at the time of this episode ; none of them to my knowledge were enemies, and one—a close friend—is seventy years of age. In America, seeing I met well-nigh a thousand people, it is conceivable that some of them were named Gertrude and may have worn green dresses—but even so. . . .

He who reads may divine that although I believe in clairvoy*ance* I do not believe in all clairvoy*ants*. When a young lady who was a Christian Scientist once informed me that she had " treated away " a dense fog from the streets of London, although I granted that such a thing *might* be done, I could not bring myself to believe that *she* had done it. Such is the subtle distinction.

It was while staying in Harlech the last summer of the war that I spent an afternoon with Mr Lloyd George and family at his house at Criccieth. Mr Percival Graves, the writer, had approached Miss Desmond and myself with a view to obtaining our services for a charity concert at which, he told us, the Prime Minister was to be present. As, however, I was far from well at the time, and had had to call in my friend Dr Heath, physician and composer, of Barmouth, I was doubtful if I should be able to play, but finally consented.

For one thing, Coburn was anxious to photograph Mr Lloyd George, and thought that perhaps with luck I could arrange for this. Nor was he to be disappointed, for circumstances planned out exactly as we wished. After I had played, Mr Lloyd George came round to the artists' room, complimented Miss Desmond on her singing and me on my songs, and thus gave me the opportunity I desired. Having armed myself with a book containing all the celebrities Coburn had photographed, I induced him to take it home and look through it; the result being that next day I received a wire from him asking me to bring my friend to tea the following Sunday. When we arrived we found, in addition to the Prime Minister, Mrs and Miss Megan Lloyd George, also Lord Milner and Sir Bertrand, now Lord Dawson.

From many sources I had heard that Mr Lloyd George was a highly magnetic personality, and this I found to be true. There was a boyishness about him and a twinkle in his expression so fascinating that both Coburn and I immediately came under his spell. As we sat over tea, I chanced to mention Mr Davison, and I remember him saying: "Oh, yes, that is the communistic gentleman who stirs up strikes in South Wales, and *we* have to go and put them right!" I hastened to tell him that such was not quite the case, and the conversation turned to other topics.

During one part of the afternoon he and I walked about the garden together, and I was struck by his capacity for "taking interest," or at any rate feigning to do so, which works out the same in the end. He asked me many questions about my life and doings, and lamented the fact that artists, poets, and musicians had been indiscriminately taken for the war, when they could have done far greater work for their country by staying at home and sticking at their own job. "I consider," added L. G., "a special committee ought to have been formed to deal with such cases."

He was then called in to be photographed and I had a talk with Lord Dawson, whom I found a singularly sympathetic man and have since come to admire for his courageous speeches in favour of birth-control. When Lloyd George reappeared, he once again manifested that capacity for showing interest. " Let's see," he said, " where were we ? "

And I told him.

But although he who was engaged in " winning the war " did not once inquire why I was not out at the front, nor even imply the question, I learned later on that people had written anonymous letters to recruiting officers, asking if I had not been rounded up. It was quite a common thing for my friends to be asked : " Why isn't Mr Scott in khaki ? " But these good people little knew what an undeserved compliment they were paying me, who am so debilitatingly soft-hearted that when, at my fourth and last medical examination, I saw men over fifty, naked, dirty, old-looking, and pathetic, being sorted out for the general slaughter, my sympathy for them was so apparent that the doctor wished to know if I suffered from chronic catarrh !

It was shortly before the ending of the war that I met Paderewski for the second time in my life. He was passing through London on his way to America, and Lady Randolph Churchill, whom I frequently used to visit, had asked me to come and dine " *en petit comité*," and to spend a quiet evening together with Paderewski and his wife. Except that his hair had become white, I found him little changed, and as expansive as ever. He remembered our meeting at Mrs Fletcher's over fourteen years ago, chided me for never having paid him a visit at Morges while I was in Switzerland, and ended by insisting that I should play him my latest piano pieces—which, however, I was loth to do,

knowing from experience how glad musicians are to take a rest from music whenever they get the chance. But as it happened, Paderewski *was* having a rest from music, being at the time engrossed in politics, of which—as history informs us—he did not make much of a success. Though kings and emperors have sometimes been musicians—did not Frederick the Great play the flute ?—so far no musician had been a king *or* a president. . . .

CHAPTER XXIV

MY AMERICAN TOUR

In the October of 1920, laden with a large packet of letters of introduction and much advice, I took the steamer to the United States. I was to play and conduct my own works ; I was also to lecture. " Now remember," said Lady Cunard just before I sailed, " you mustn't tell them over there they are a young country, because they won't like it." And I remembered—it was an American himself who contrived that I should not forget. I had alluded to the prodigious amount of crime in Chicago and elsewhere. " Ah, but you see we're a young country," he answered. " What can you expect ? " Something similar happened before I returned to England. " Be very careful what you write when you get home," a friend warned me, " the people here in the States are very sensitive. . . . " He too was an American ! Thus at the very outset the unfortunate autobiographer has to write with a tethered pen : if he relates nothing, he gives offence by his silence ; if he tells the truth, he gives offence by his candour. Perhaps the best course for him would be to die—and that he doesn't want to do, so lives on and chances the consequences. . . . Yet I have gathered one thing from all this : the American does not mind admitting certain facts himself, but he hates foreigners to admit them, or even to notice them. In this respect he has a touch of the feminine ; he is like a woman who finds fault with her lover from morning till night, yet wishes everybody else to think

him perfect; maybe it is a laudable trait, though an inconvenient one—for the lover.

On arriving in New York, where I was met by my publisher's representative, Mr George Maxwell of Ricordi & Co., I went straight to Percy Grainger and his mother who were living in Madison Avenue. I had not seen either of them for six years, and although Mrs G. was then fifty-nine, she looked astonishingly young and still very pretty. Percy was unchanged, and seemed to have contracted no new habits of speech; a matter which surprised me, since in his letters to me and other friends he had expatiated on the wonders of America and the Americans; but then, with true individualists imitation is not *always* the sincerest form of flattery. Mrs Grainger had got me a room out, some distance away, but I was to take my meals at their apartment, so that I might see as much of them as possible; for most of their time they were extremely busy. Thus on a very hot day—the weather was strangely warm for October—I took my first American lunch, and Mrs Grainger regaled me with the many successes of her son, and their equally many ventures and adventures during the last six years. Later on, when he came to show me his compositions, I realised that those six years had told—his work had become more modern, richer both in harmony and polyphony; he had much improved.

After a few days engaged in finding my bearings, visiting my prospective manager, Mr Loudon Charlton, and talking business, I took out my bundle of letters. I felt no inclination for paying calls, but I was lonely and unsettled, and told myself I ought to be up and doing. An American friend in London had especially mentioned two people with whom she said I would be charmed, and whom I must not fail to go and see at once. I selected the letter in question and presented myself about five o'clock one afternoon at the door of

a magnificent flat in Park Avenue. But although I rang repeatedly I got no reply, so slipped my letter of introduction with my card into the letter-box and went away. Two days later I received a typed communication, stating that if I would call on Mr —— at his office one morning, he would be pleased to see me. I called at the address indicated, and found myself in an enormous bookshop. "Is Mr—— in?" I asked one of the employées. "There he is," she answered, pointing to a man a little distance away, "he's talking to a customer." I waited till he was disengaged, then introduced myself. "Oh, yes," he said, "pleased to meet you, Mr Scott—what can I do for you?" I was taken aback: what indeed could I ask him, in so many words, to do for me? I could hardly say: "Please allow me to be your friend and take me into the bosom of your family. . . ." So after the exchange of a few platitudes I said good-bye, and nothing further happened.

"My dear man," said Grainger when I told him about it, "letters of introduction are no earthly good: I should burn the lot." "That's all very fine," I answered; "but what will the people say who took the trouble to write them?" He shrugged his shoulders. And it was only when I sailed back to Europe that at least *some* light was thrown on the matter. Having become friendly with a Miss Camilla Lippincote, a charming girl from Washington who was on the boat, I told her my experience. "The fact is, people have got rather sick of foreigners," she said with engaging candour. Her pronouncement nevertheless was only applicable to New York itself, for everywhere else I found the hospitality quite phenomenal.

Yet after that first experience, although I was rather chary of presenting letters, I did present a few, which produced varying results—some agreeable dinner-parties, or answers to the effect that the recipients

were away from home, and would inform me when they returned—which they did *not* do ; and this seemed the more strange, because a friend in London had almost alarmed me by what he had related of American hospitality. " Why, you'll hardly get a moment to yourself," he had said, " you'll be taken out to lunch, tea, dinner, supper, every single day—and by the most attractive girls. *I* was, and I'm only a business-man ! " Yes—but he was young : not forty-two years of age. Though I have no doubt whatever there exist very beautiful girls in the States, I saw very few of them ; the sexes may mix together, but not so the old and the young ; at the dinner-parties to which I was invited, the youngest woman would be about forty—it was disappointing.

But, of course, I did not discover all this during the first few days after my arrival ; what I did discover was just as curious in its way : the fact that nobody took the trouble to pull down the blinds while undressing for the night. A trivial thing to remark upon, I admit, when there were the enormous and imposing buildings to engage one's attention, but it was just these which brought it all the more forcibly to notice ; the unobstructed view of six illuminated bedrooms, which I saw while pulling down my own blind, I would have passed by, but a hundred and sixty. . . .

I stayed three weeks in New York before travelling to Philadelphia for my first engagement with Mr Stokowski and the Philadelphia Orchestra ; and during that time the ever-generous and energetic Mrs Grainger gave large tea-parties " to meet Mr Cyril Scott." In this way many people got to know *me*, but unfortunately I did not get to know *them*. Their names were mentioned, we shook hands, they all asked me how I liked America, then, when later on I gave my first recital, they came to hear me play and shook hands with me once again in the artists' room. They had been kind to me, and done me a good turn, and yet I

who benefited had not even remembered their names—there were so many of them. My nature, being a grateful one, caused me to feel there was something wrong about all this, so I was glad when I could meet people at smaller gatherings and really become acquainted with them. At one of these gatherings, I met Mr Walter Kramer and Mr Eugene Hueffley, and am happy to count these two men among my friends; both of them are artists, large-hearted and understanding, and I am glad that both of them are American—for they possess certain lovable characteristics which are peculiar only to Americans. I also met Mr Ernest Urchs of the firm of Steinway (I always played the unsurpassed Steinway Grand), and was afterwards indebted to him for many pleasant evenings in company with him and his family.

Of course I was not long in getting into touch with my old friend Henry Hadley who, I soon came to see, had lost none of his breeziness. "You must come out to supper with me," he said, "and meet some pretty women; they'll be tickled to death" — meaning delighted—"if you play them one or two of your things." But somehow that supper-party did not materialise; for one thing, Hadley is a very busy man.

When the time came for me to go to Philadelphia I had my first experience of big American hotels, and did not altogether enjoy it. It was a trifle disconcerting to unaccustomed ears to overhear the porters, as they struggled after me with my luggage, ask: "What's the number of the guy's room, anyway?" Then there were other things—how to work the electric light puzzled me, how much and when to tip the waiter, how and where to get my boots cleaned, and how to get to my bedroom on the heaven knows what floor without a prodigious waste of time. Besides, in that enormous building I felt lost and lonely, and would have felt even more so, except for the kindness of Mr James Francis Cooke, editor of *The Etude*,

whom I had met in New York, and who called on me and took me out for drives in his car. From him, by the way, I learnt a few curious customs of Philadelphia. He lived in a large residential Park, but told me that he had either to fetch or send for his letters every morning, no postman being permitted in that neighbourhood. "But why?" I asked, greatly mystified. "In the old times," he answered, "the Squire used to ride on horseback to the post office to collect his mail—the authorities won't allow the tradition to be interfered with." "In that case," I said, amused at such childishness (or snobbishness), "I wonder they allow you to fetch them in your motor." He laughed, and wondered likewise.

Before I left Philadelphia I received a call from my friend the violinist Henry Such, who had settled down in America and acquired a large *clientèle* of pupils. "Come away from this hotel," he said, "and stay with us." I jumped at his invitation, though only one night was left before engagements called me back to New York. Henry Such is a cousin of H. D. Harben and every bit as absent-minded, if not more so. His wife told me she once left the house at noon when he was giving a lesson on some concerto or other, the strains of which she heard from the next room. When she returned at three o'clock, to her astonishment she heard those same strains; he had quite forgotten the passage of time and was still giving the same lesson!

I am not concerned with writing about my musical career in the United States—for there is such a virtue as modesty. Suffice it to say that the American audiences showed me the greatest possible kindness, and for this I have not only to thank the audiences themselves, but those conductors and orchestral players who took part in my performances. Ample time for rehearsing was both permitted and generously given, with results very

gratifying to myself, so that from each town where I played and conducted I came away with a forcible impression of the excellence of the orchestra.

My appearance at Philadelphia had, so to say, started the ball rolling; after that I was continually on the move. This was good for my exchequer, but the distances I was obliged to travel were horrifying to my English mind; and long hours, even days and nights in those stuffy, frame-shattering trains, not to mention having to lie with my head just above the hot-water pipes, increased my headaches a hundred per cent. On more than one occasion I spent two days and two nights in the train, played the evening of my arrival, then travelled another two days and two nights. Of sleep for me there was next to none; and if I did at length manage to doze off, I was rudely awakened by what I thought must be an accident, but what was in reality nothing more than the American idea of shunting, which is of a particularly violent nature. Even during the day I did not fare much better. Though I sat in a luxurious armchair and looked out of the window, I was not permitted the comforting influence of a cigar or pipe; in order to enjoy either of these I was forced to seek the unromantic atmosphere of the lavatory, where, confronted by the view of several wash-basins, and sandwiched between other passengers—often fat ones—I might sit on an uncomfortable seat and smoke. But it was not a pipe of peace I smoked over a pleasant book, for the other occupants of that seat were usually loud-voiced talkers who made anything in the nature of quiet contemplation out of the question. And yet I had heard so much of the comforts of American travelling: strange that the facts should be so little in accordance with hearsay.

I have heard the expression "free country" in connection with the United States almost since my childhood, and I saw the Statue of Liberty to remind

me of this when I sailed into New York harbour. But, wonderful as the ideal is which that statue symbolises, somehow the freedom of free countries results in an alarming amount of bondage, and in even worse conditions still. It practically means that every crank with a bee in his bonnet is allowed to make as many laws as he wishes; and though this may be all very well for *him*, it is most unfortunate for his fellows. Yet the Americans are so eminently kind, hospitable, and long-suffering, that instead of rising up in a body and passing one comprehensive law against all cranks and busybodies, they not only tolerate them but their notions as well. Thus, while on my travels, I came across a few laws that were so cryptic as to be quite incomprehensible. Two publishers with whom I lunched in Boston told me that shortly after the war a very conspicuous and loud-voiced Austrian had visited the States, and desiring to show him some courtesy, they thought of inviting him to dinner; but as they feared the sound of German might cause offence in a large restaurant, they tried to engage a private room. "How many are there in your party?" the manager asked. "Three men," was the reply.

"Sorry—it can't be done."

"What do you mean—can't be done?"

"It's against the law."

"But man alive, do you mean to tell me that three members of the same sex can't have a private room to dine in?"

"There must be four!"

They were dumbfounded; used persuasions, but all to no purpose: the manager was adamant.

I also heard that in one of the States all linen manufacturers were compelled to make bed-sheets seven feet in length. . . . A very tall man finding himself inconvenienced by sheets of normal length had taken steps to pass this law—and succeeded! But apart from legislative curiosities of this nature—for I need

not mention laws against drinking, card-playing, and cigarette-smoking—I noticed that whereas in this country a man may be *requested* not to spit or smoke, in America one everywhere sees placards informing the public that " it is unlawful " to do either of these. One is, in fact, at every turn painfully reminded of the presence of the law. There are also times when one is painfully reminded of its absence—namely, when one reads a scurrilous attack in the newspaper upon some unoffending individual.

Last summer I was smarting with sympathy for my friend Mr George Maxwell, one of the many victims of these attacks. Flaring head-lines had appeared, denouncing him as a " pen-poisoner," a writer of threatening and improper letters, in brief—a most objectionable character. There was not a shred of evidence to warrant these dreadful allegations—as the judge pointed out when he dismissed the case—yet because of the " freedom of the press " Mr Maxwell was unable to take any action against the various newspapers for libel.

" The fact is," said an American friend of mine, " we are all far too fond of the personal element—anything for a personal sensation ! " And certainly I noticed this in many ways, one being the unusual interest which my appearance seemed to excite. My stock tie, for instance, proved a butt at which the journalist aimed his sharp-pointed journalistic darts. He little knew that far from being a symbol of eccentricity, it is over here quite a common article of adornment, and may be bought for the small sum of two-and-six at Hope Brothers. It was once even alleged that I played in a dinner-jacket—but to this I plead not guilty, and suggest that the critic had forgotten his spectacles.

Among the innumerable questions which were put to me, I was again and again asked what I thought of American audiences—and somewhat to my surprise I

found that I thought more highly of them than the questioners themselves. In nearly every town I visited, some well-meaning person would warn me before my appearance that nowhere was the audience so cold and unresponsive as in that particular spot—a remark which evoked the thought that not only prophets but also audiences are not without honour, save in their own country.

Yet, leaving aside the question of appreciation on the part of the music-loving inhabitants, there were certain towns which I especially and pleasantly remember; one was Boston, where I enjoyed many hours in the company of Mr Philip Hale, America's most eminent musical *littérateur*. It was in Boston that I met my old friends Mr Percy Lee Atherton, Mr Arms Fisher of the Oliver Ditson Co., and finally Mr Charles Joseph Dyer, who took me to call on that remarkable old lady Mrs Jack Gardiner in her Venetian house, the beauties of which are unforgettable. I was also—after a lecture I gave at the Harvard University—taken to see the celebrated Miss Amy Lowell. She is a large-proportioned woman with a striking face, who, I understand, gets up at 4 in the afternoon and goes to bed at 7 a.m., during which hours, when she is not writing *vers libre*, her companion is reading detective stories to her. On a table in her room I saw at least forty of the newest "shockers" waiting to be enjoyed by this singular poetess. I may mention that she smokes the blackest and strongest cigars.

Of Buffalo, where I stayed with the noted oculist Dr Park Lewis and his musically talented family, I have also very pleasant recollections, and ones which are associated with a glimpse of the true American home-life. It was from Buffalo that I set out for Canada, the objectives of my tour being Montreal, Winnipeg, and Toronto. I have never been to Russia, but what with its sleighs and the musical tinkling of sleigh-bells, Montreal called to mind the picture which my

imagination conjures up in connection with that country. From my windows in the house of a Mr and Mrs Scott—odd coincidence—who kindly offered me hospitality, I looked out on to a beautiful snow-clad park, belonging to the University: where, by the way, I was one afternoon the guest at a tea-party, at which I had to shake hands with close on three hundred people. Luckily I did not have to play the piano afterwards. . . . Unless my memory errs, it was in Montreal that a reviewer wrote a long article likening my appearance to that of Chopin! and making considerable "copy" out of the supposition. At the other towns I visited in Canada I was treated with extraordinary kindness; though my stay in Toronto proved actually the most *gemütlich*. My friend Mr W. O. Forsyth lives in the latter place, where at the Academy—or is it College?—of music he is the leading piano professor. Some years before the war he sought an introduction to me through Mr Elkin, and ever since then not only has the warmest sympathy existed between us, but with his enthusiastic and generous-hearted temperament he has used every means in his power to further my interests in Canada. The days spent in his company and that of his wife and daughter were indeed stimulating ones, and helped me to recover from the very painful shock I had recently sustained in Winnipeg—I had travelled for two days, and had arrived at my hotel early on a bitterly cold morning (eight degrees below zero), when I was handed a letter in Mrs Grainger's familiar writing. "I can hardly put pen to paper," she began, "as I am so terribly upset by poor Gervase Elwes' tragic death." But details she gave me none, and the only information I could get at the hotel was that he had been killed in Boston Station. The shock to me was all the more considerable, because only a few days previously I had seen him both in Chicago and New York in excellent health and spirits. His death meant the loss of a very

fine artist, and also of a man of impeccable character: and although my beliefs did not allow me to think he had passed into nothingness, my feelings for his wife gave me acute pain. Many were the happy week-ends I had spent at his paternal home near Northampton, the memory of which came back to me with sad vividness. And as I write these lines, how strange it seems that Mrs Grainger, who was the news-bearer of this tragedy, should herself die an even more tragic death some fourteen months later; and, moreover, that my mother should have passed over on the very same day. Yet, whereas I never read of Elwes' death in the paper, I not only read of Mrs Grainger's, but also of a fortune, part of which, the report alleged, she had left as a contingent bequest to *me*. That this fortune did not exist I soon came to hear from Percy Grainger himself, who begged me as far as possible to counteract the effects of a newspaper fabrication which was particularly unpleasant to him.

My American tour extended over five months, and although the majority of my concerts were engagements, I gave four recitals at my own risk—two in New York and two in Boston. My first New York recital, owing largely, I feel sure, to the reputation and efforts of my collaborator, Mme. Eva Gauthier, who sang my songs so admirably, was sold out, and many people had to be turned away. It was the same in Boston; but, unfortunately, I was prevailed upon against my own inclination to give a second recital—and the outcome was not satisfactory. Had I let myself be guided by my experience in Chicago and flatly declined to give more than one recital in one place, it would have repaid me: but my advisers thought otherwise.

I had been booked by a concert agent, Miss Kinsolving, to give a Sunday afternoon recital in Chicago; and she informed me that hardly during her experience of concert-promoting had such interest been shown in

a first recital.[1] People were even demanding tickets weeks before they were printed. Then one morning she met me with a very long face. "The recital's ruined," she said.

I looked at her in some bewilderment.

"They've gone and advertised you for the Symphony Concerts."

I was still at a loss.

"Why, don't you see, all the people who intended to take tickets for your recital are saying they'll hear you anyhow—they're nearly all subscribers to those concerts. It was no use my telling them that a recital's something quite different. In this town it's mostly curiosity which makes people go and hear artists—as long as they can say they've heard them, that's all they care about!"

Of course I felt very sorry for Miss Kinsolving, and told her that if the recital proved a fiasco, she must let me "stand the racket." But this she would not hear of; it was not with me she had her quarrel, but with my management. And I regret to say that owing to the fact that she had taken a large theatre rather than a medium-sized hall, my recital, though well attended, resulted in a loss. After all, perhaps her assertion was correct—and curiosity is an incentive to concert-going. Certainly neither of my second recitals in Boston nor New York paid their way, in spite of the great enthusiasm shown during the first ones and afterwards at the rather embarrassing ordeal in the artists' room, where I shook hands with a prodigious number of people I had never met, and felt like an official signing passports—so many autographs were demanded.

A propos of autographs—I was once waiting for a friend in one of those offices with glass doors, when I noticed a young lady loitering outside with a piece of music in her hand. When my friend arrived, he

[1] My manager said exactly the same of my New York recital.

whispered to me: "There's someone who has been hanging about here for God knows how long—she wants me to introduce her." The young lady was accordingly brought in, and after making pretty speeches put one of my songs on the table. "I would like to have you sign that," she said. I wrote my name and handed it back to her. "Oh, that won't do at all," she objected, "you must write 'To Miss ——' otherwise how are people to know you've done it for *me*?" Not wishing to protract the interview I did as requested.

It was in the same town where I met this exacting enthusiast, that I received a telephone-call in my hotel.

"Mr Cyril Scott?" asked a female voice.

"That's my name."

"Ah, that naughty man, Mr X.—he might have sent me word you were coming—I guess he meant to really, but forgot—you know what he's like!"

Unfortunately, however, I did not in the least know what he was like, nor even *who* he was. But then I had met so many people, I couldn't remember them all.

"Now, you *will* take lunch with me and my daughter to-day, won't you?" the voice continued, "even though Mr X. has been such a bum and forgotten to mail me a letter. I am sure I shall enjoy you, and you will enjoy me."

I politely agreed that no doubt we should mutually "enjoy" each other, and accepted the invitation. As it might have been rather awkward if I had met the mysterious Mr X. again, and he learned that I had quite forgotten his name, it seemed the best course to adopt.

And I did eventually meet him again. "Oh, *that* crazy woman," he said, when I mentioned the incident to him.

It is a more usual thing in the United States than in

this country to write to persons with whom one is not actually acquainted. Thus I received a prodigious quantity of letters asking questions of various kinds, asking for autographs, or even for signed photos. Such attentions are, of course, very flattering; but as I was exceedingly busy there were times when I was unable to reply to all my correspondents, and still less to send them photos, of which I had not a sufficient supply. Frequently Mr Maxwell's services would be requisitioned, and often as I entered his office he would greet me with: "There's another good lady been this morning bothering me to get her a signed photo of you. I told her you'd have to keep a secretary and a private photographer on the spot, if you were going to provide photos for everyone who asked for them!"

But knowing Mr Maxwell as I do, I imagine that although afterwards he may have *thought* that he thus disposed of the importunate lady, he actually said something a little more consistent with his *distingué* and impressive personality.

At the end of February I sailed back to Europe by the southern route, and on an Italian boat of comparatively small tonnage. We had a dreadful passage, and were blown over sixty miles out of our course; only after we had entered the Mediterranean did we get beautiful weather. But, luckily, I am a good sailor, so enjoyed the trip. There were some perfectly charming Americans on board, and their enthusiasm on seeing Palermo—where we landed—was contagious and stimulating. And certainly the contrast between the twentieth century atmosphere and the twelfth was, to say the least, striking. Besides, we had left New York in a blizzard and entered Palermo to find the most perfect cerulean spring weather, the grass white with daisies, the geraniums and freesias in flower, and the oranges and lemons fully ripe in the groves. It was

for me an unforgettable experience—that day spent among cloisters and old churches after the bustle and turmoil of my life in the States.

Yet, let me not be misunderstood. I feel nothing but gratitude towards the American people for their treatment of me ; and if my life was a strenuous one, after all I had not gone over there merely to twirl my thumbs. It was, in fact, the inherent receptiveness and general tolerance of the Americans towards new ideas, musical and otherwise, which made such activity on my part possible. If they had been a conservative people and had not accepted me and my works, I could have luxuriated in idleness and amused myself in contemplation of the imposing sky-scrapers while I waited for a steamer to take me home. As it was, I not only booked a large number of engagements, but had I chosen to remain longer could have booked a great many more. In that case, instead of only seeing a comparatively few of the wonders of a wonderful country, I should have doubtless returned with an even greater impression of them than I did. But although I have not actually expatiated upon these wonders, but rather have " permitted myself a little gaiety "—as Nietzsche puts it—over the less agreeable things, it is merely because thus to expatiate would be but to re-echo what others have already said. Moreover, some of the renownedly beautiful cities, such as Washington, I never visited, nor did I get a glimpse of the splendours of California ; having made up my mind to remain only five months, there was not sufficient time to cover such immense distances as a journey to the south-west would have entailed.

But this much, pertaining exclusively to matters musical, I will say : Where but in America can we find so many musical philanthropists, such as Mrs F. S. Coolidge, for one, who are ready every year to spend sums almost amounting to fortunes for the sole benefit of music-lovers ? And then in connection with concert

orchestras : not once did I hear the so-typical remark : " We can't do such-and-such a work because there is no money for rehearsals. . . . " With the American citizen the love of music is genuine and deep-rooted enough for him to wish to pay for it—and handsomely at that. Neither conductors nor soloists are underpaid in the States, with the result that the finest in the world sooner or later gravitate over there and take up their permanent abode. It may be inconvenient for us in Europe to lose our most shining musical lights, but one can but admire a people whose enthusiasm is such that they say : " We intend to have the best and we intend to pay for it." One may hear much about the aspirations of this country to be considered a musical nation, but when it comes to a tug-of-war between love of music and love of keeping one's money in one's pocket, the latter usually wins. Although, as I have elsewhere implied, ratepayers and philanthropists are ready to pay for libraries, parks, statues, and drinking-fountains, they are not ready to pay for opera-houses and concert orchestras. As to those gentlemen who act as guarantors to orchestral societies and operatic enterprises, they are not infrequently Jews, Germans, or both : and as everybody knows that the Jews originally came from the Orient, they can hardly be considered a factor in the musicality of the British nation. Does the tradesman in this country, after amassing an enormous fortune, build an opera-house, or endow an orchestra ? Not so—he builds yachts or buys race-horses ; but in America one hears of successful business men supporting orchestras, or, like Mr Wanamaker, building gigantic organs with their profits. Yet they too might just as well erect monuments and drinking-fountains, if their preference for music did not inspire them to do otherwise.

Thus I take off my hat to the American people—to their enthusiasms, their many-sided appreciations, their power of organising, their desire to forge ahead,

their capacity to discriminate, their hospitality, and their hero-worship ; and even if their trains augmented my headaches, their immense distances tired me out, and their autograph-collecting ruined my pet fountain-pen, I still take off my hat to them—as I did that cold February evening when I saw the lights of New York harbour paling in the increasing distance.

I arrived at Folkestone on a pleasant April afternoon, heartily glad to see the old familiar sights. The Pullman from Folkestone to London seemed so particularly elegant, the well-groomed attendants so obliging, and the tea and buttered toast so appetising and refreshing. I was in excellent spirits as I looked once more at the sun-bathed English landscape, and reflected that after travelling tens of thousands of miles I was nearing my home. It was good to look forward to settling down to work again, to a quiet life of mental and inspirational activity. . . .

I stood before the door of my house and rang the bell : but there was no response. Having written to advise my housekeeper of the time of my arrival, I thought this very curious ; but concluding that she must have just run round to the shops for a few moments, I got my keys out of one of my suit-cases and entered. On my desk I found a note addressed to me and marked " Strictly Private." It ran : " Forgive me, after all your great kindness to me—but I can't face any more trouble. Please speak kindly to my daughter when she comes. Your ever grateful, C. Jolly." In the note were enclosed a row of pawntickets. " Poor woman," I thought, " she's gone and pawned my clothes, feels unable to face me, and is sending her daughter to look after me instead." Then I noticed a piece of paper, stuck in a conspicuous place ; on it was written in large block letters : " When you go upstairs, don't take a light—the gas is leaking."

" She might at least have got in a plumber before

she departed," I said to myself as I went upstairs, with each step the smell of gas becoming worse and worse. I opened the door of my bedroom, and as I did so, recoiled—in the dim twilight I saw a huddled mass lying in front of the fireplace: it was my eiderdown, and inside my eiderdown was my housekeeper with the gas-tube in her mouth—dead. . . . In a very few seconds I was violently ringing the bell at my neighbour's, Dr Pope.

"What on earth's the matter?" he exclaimed, "you look. . . ."

"My housekeeper's committed suicide—for heaven's sake, go round and try artificial respiration—you may be able to save her——"

He was off—and I was left to pull my nerves together in his consulting-room. But although Dr Pope tried for some time to revive her, his efforts were unavailing. "I have telephoned to the police," he said on his return, pressing a glass of brandy into my hand, "but they tell me they won't be able to send for the body at once, so you'd better come and stay with me here for a few days." I blessed him for his kindness and accepted.

There was, of course, an inquest, at which I had to appear, and at which there were painful scenes. Yet although there could be no doubt that the poor neurasthenic creature had committed suicide because she was tormented by remorse, the coroner said he would give her the benefit of the doubt and add the modifying clause "while of unsound mind. . . ."

And that was my homecoming!

CHAPTER XXV

UNCOMMON FRIENDS

I CANNOT remember what year I met Nandor Zsolt, but I had known his exceedingly charmful violin compositions for some time ; there were only two of them published, for as I was soon to discover, this singular young man was so preoccupied with *affaires de cœur* that the still, small voice of his Muse was all too often drowned by the noisy tempest of his emotions. It was after a concert at the Æolian Hall that Miss Daisy Kennedy introduced us, Zsolt having come over from Hungary, his native country, to try his fortunes in England. Not unnaturally I had imagined someone different from the bullet-headed little man with rats'-back hair and a yellow overcoat reaching merely to his hips, whom I was destined to meet that evening. Yet if his appearance—so totally devoid of any of the insignia of artistry—was unexpected, his manner was even more so ; he permitted himself in his broken English a naïve naturalness of speech which caused those with whom he came in contact either to blush or to laugh, according to the sensitiveness of their dispositions.

From the very first I became excellent friends with Zsolt, his comicalities, his warm-heartedness, and his surpriseful admiration for what he termed my " industry " and its results, being quite irresistible. " What ! You have written a whole piano piece in two days ! " he would exclaim, " why, I have only written three bars—but I'm so in love, and so worried—it is terrible ! " And then would follow a long history of his violent sentiments for some woman considerably

older than himself, for whom he was ready to do everything except permit her to love somebody else. As it happened, his sentiments were usually reciprocated, and often from his pocket he would take a bulky envelope and shake it in my face by way of proof. "Twenty-four pages in that!" he would declare; "and yet I only saw her the day before yesterday. . . ." To describe some men *plus* their predilection for love-affairs might be to incur the danger of being libellous; to describe Zsolt *minus* this predilection would be libellous. He gloried in these affairs, talked incessantly about them, and felt both astonishment and gratitude that he should be singled out by so many women as the recipient of their love. And there was even more than documentary evidence to show that he was fabricating no myths; several times I myself was called upon to offer sympathy and advice to the women in question. He received their love and I received their confidences; he was the practitioner and I was the consultant. It was the price I paid for my ideas on non-jealousy which he admired but could not emulate, and which at times I fervently wished I had kept to myself, for the spectacle of feminine tears is painful to a tender heart. Besides, other hearts were involved, and there were difficulties of a formidable nature.

When the war came Zsolt was interned, and finally shipped back to Hungary, whence he wrote to my publisher that although he was dining with countesses every night he had not enough money to pay for a clean shirt. Since then, however, his fortunes have revived, though he has favoured me personally with no letters to inform me of the fact. Is it because at the end I remonstrated with him on the subject of his all too inflammable heart? Perhaps it is. . . .

Musicians are normally endowed with a liberal abundance of wit, which takes various forms. At one

time Mr Benjamin Dale and Mr York Bowen used to convulse their friends by reproducing the opening bars of *Tristan* in a very singular manner—namely, by blowing double notes through their fingers. Mr York Bowen, moreover, possessed the accomplishment of being able to blow his nose on any given note. When I visit my old friend Roger Quilter, I come away with aching muscles ; he has not talked shop, he has done something much better . . . he has made me laugh ! It is the same when I dine with that talented couple Hubert and Kitty Eisdell—the latter being known for her charming songs, which she writes under her maiden name of Kitty Parker. Most music-lovers have heard Mr Hubert Eisdell sing, and appreciated his exquisite quality of voice and interpretation, but I think few of them realise, as they look at his boyish and almost seraphic face, what an imp of mischief it conceals. One evening I was dining at his flat in company with a young lady who was staying at Queen Alexandra's Hostel for Students. As the rule was that all the guests had to be in by a certain hour, and that hour had already gone by, Hubert Eisdell rang up to explain matters.

" Is that Queen Alexandra's Hostel ? " we heard.

The answer was evidently in the affirmative.

" Is that Queen Alexandra speaking ? " was the next question.

This time he received a negative reply.

" No ? Well, perhaps you wouldn't mind taking her a message to explain that Miss C. will be a bit late to-night. . . . "

Mr Bertram Binyon is another singer with comedianistic talents, one of his great stunts being the production of a *tableau vivant* of Queen Victoria. With sleeves rolled up, a napkin on his head surmounted by an inverted brass receptacle, and a shawl thrown across his large person, Mr Binyon contrives to look imposingly

regal; the finishing touch is supplied by a facial contortion. "I can't keep it up for long, though," he explains, "somehow it makes me squint." Mr Binyon possesses the additional talent of being able to sing "correctly" to any improvised accompaniment. At the end of an evening in which he and I had burlesqued Wagnerian opera together, I remember Mr Henry Arthur Jones saying to one of us that he had not had such an amusing entertainment for years. The entertainment, however, is one for which I pay more dearly than Binyon; as besides supplying the orchestra I also have to supply the female singers, I usually end the evening with a sore throat as the result of my falsetto strainings.

My friend Mr Albert Coates, although he is not so very much younger than I am, has retained a captivating boyishness; I have even known him to exhibit the characteristics of an *enfant terrible*. Shortly after my wife and I had decided that it was our duty to the State to take on the office of parenthood, I visited Albert Coates in the green-room at the end of one of his concerts. "Darling Cyril," he exclaimed, clasping me to him, "I haven't seen you for ages. And isn't it wonderful?" he added, turning to a young lady with whom I was not acquainted, "*he's expecting*. . . ." Whether she *thought* it wonderful, I can't say, not knowing her views on paternity, but certainly she *looked* as if she thought the remark an embarrassing one—and so did I!

It was during the war that I formed so close a friendship with Mrs Milligan-Fox, whose efforts in connection with folk-song setting brought her into prominence with a certain section of the musical public. She was a lovable and irresponsible Irishwoman, a semi-invalid, and endowed with psychic faculties of a moderately reliable type. I used, on an average, to spend three evenings a week in her society, when I would either

play to her or else discuss mysticism and philosophy. Very frequently she would " turn on " her clairvoyance for my benefit, and see the spirits of departed friends, or anyone who wished to communicate with us. One evening an Indian appeared on the scene—an imposing-looking personage, as she said, with a very benign countenance. But although she could clairaudiently hear his remarks, which she repeated to me, they were too metaphysically technical for her to understand, and I was obliged to explain them. Before the " apparition " disappeared, I requested her to ask his name.

" Vivekananda," was the reply.

On another occasion when we were sitting in my music-room, talking about nothing in particular, she broke off suddenly and said : " A curious self-effacing little man has just appeared."

" Ask him what he wants," I suggested. She did so, but was unable to understand the reply. " He's talking what sounds like Italian," she explained.

" Try French."

She complied, and listened for a moment. " He says he wants you to write a special requiem for those who have died in the war."

As I was busy with something else, the idea did not altogether appeal to me, so I asked her to tell the little man I would think about it. " Anything else ? " I added.

" He says he was a composer when he lived on earth, and is following modern music with great interest. Would you not leave one of your scores open for him to study ? "

I promised I would do as requested, but thought within myself the unfortunate man must be somewhat earthbound, if he required material print from which to read.

The following day I went to a music-shop and bought all the photos of Italian composers I could find, and

in the evening, laden with my packet, I called on Mrs Fox.

" Why, that's the little man," she exclaimed, singling out a picture postcard, " and very like him it is too." It was Cherubini. . . .

Mrs Fox's visionary faculties were, I think, on the whole more reliable than her premonitions, for the latter were apt to be coloured by her own apprehensions and viewpoints. Once, I remember, her imagination caused her to " sense " that a near relative of hers was ill, so she despatched a wire asking him to relieve her mind. Being very impatient of anything in the nature of psychism and second sight, he sent a reply which, if reassuring, was hardly polite. " Don't be a fool," were the words which greeted her when she opened the envelope.

Her apprehensions on my own behalf also caused her a good deal of inconvenience. Though neither unpatriotic nor selfish, she was constantly disturbed by the thought that I would be taken for the war, and even went so far as to bother some of her titled friends to use their influence. It was in vain that I told her my disabilities precluded me from sharing a worse fate than that of an ignominious branding with " C 3 "—she refused to be pacified ; doctors were so blind and stupid, she averred. Nevertheless, in the end it was she who departed, leaving me to regret the loss of a dear and most entertaining friend.

Not long ago I received a letter from an American who desired to make my acquaintance, and suggested I should lunch with him as he had a proposal to make which he felt would be to our mutual advantage. He gave me the names of various people to whom he could have applied for an introduction, but deeming it unnecessary, had not done so. Over lunch I was to discover that my correspondent had journeyed to England on a great mission—it was to spiritualise the

world. . . . To back up this magnificent project, he told me he had the promise of vast sums of money upon which he could call at any moment. Among other things which he intended to reform were newspapers and the pantomimes, and for the latter he required music, and music of a very specific kind, preferably from my own pen. He also required articles on spiritual subjects—likewise from my own pen.

After our first luncheon together we met a number of times, and each time I was treated to an indefatigable and wonder-creating flow of language. So prodigious was this, that even if I went out of the room to fetch a cigar or pipe, the flow was not interrupted for a moment, and I could still hear the distant sound of a voice, though I was unable to distinguish the actual words.

One Friday morning this singular idealist called on me. "Could you let me have £6," he asked, "just till Tuesday? It's merely that my draft hasn't come from America, but it's sure to turn up by Tuesday, so I promise to let you have the money then without fail. I'll bring it back in person."

I lent him the £6 and asked him to dine with me on the Tuesday night. On the morning of that day, however, I received a wire saying he could not come, but that he would ring up and fix an appointment for another day. A week passed, and finally he did ring up.

"I hope you don't think too badly of me," he said, "but I've been worried to death. My fiancée is terribly ill and I can't leave her bedside. As soon as ever she's a bit better I'll come, and I'll bring you the money."

I sympathised with him, of course, and told him I was in no desperate hurry about the settlement of the loan.

A month or more went by, and I got a letter from him bearing the Biarritz postmark. He informed me he had got married, was on his honeymoon, hoped that I would write him a line, and that I would safely receive the £6 which he was instructing the Crédit Lyonnais to forward me at once. Wishing to kill two birds with

one stone, however, I deferred writing till I could at the same time acknowledge the receipt of the money. But although I waited for weeks which lengthened into months, no cheque arrived—instead, I got a postcard stating he was in Egypt, but would shortly arrive in Paris, and finally in London. In the meantime he gave me an address and asked me to post him a line to tell him why I had not written : he feared I might be ill. To this I replied, giving the above-mentioned reason, and suggesting that as he intended soon to be in London, he could refund me the money after his arrival.

Again months passed : then I got a letter from New York. " Please forward me your permanent address," he wrote (strange, seeing he had been to my permanent address so many times !), " because I want to send you that money you lent me *plus the interest*." I did as desired—though, of course, demanded no interest—and the result was an unexpected one. In an affectionate but brief note he replied : " Herewith £3 for the present."

Since that time I have heard no more ; incidentally I have become a little sceptical of his power to spiritualise the world.

Indefatigable enthusiasm is as refreshing as it is rare. . . . One day, a few years before the war, I received a call from a short, broad-shouldered man bearing a striking resemblance to the portraits of Beethoven. He visited me in order to pour out his enthusiasm in connection with what he termed my novel manner of treating the pianoforte ; according to him I had invented a new technique, although I was quite ignorant of the fact myself. This arresting figure hailed from Bohemia, he was twenty-seven years old, and his name was Edward Goll. Having learnedly expatiated on the subtleties of my technique, he proceeded to give me concrete examples on the piano.

He played exquisitely, yet lamented that in his own touch there was not that caressive quality which he discerned in mine, but in that of no other pianist. He intended, however, to set about to acquire it—I should see—later on he would come and show me—it would be wonderful. He departed, and the warm glow of his enthusiasm lingered, as it were, in the room after he had gone.

The next I heard of him was from Australia. He had met a widow (with one daughter), had fallen in love with her at first sight, and had eventually married her. He was the happiest man on earth—he had somebody to look after him and to bemother him. She was older than himself—but what did that matter? —he looked older than he actually was.

Ten years passed, and Goll, his wife, and her daughter sailed to England. In appearance he was much changed; his hair had gone quite white, but he still retained that engaging childlikeness of manner, and his enthusiasm had not one whit abated. He had made a big name for himself in Australia—his recitals were packed to overflowing, he had countless pupils, was adored by elderly spinsters and others—and looked upon Australia as a foretaste of Heaven on earth. When I saw Mrs Goll, I, too, fell a victim to her variety of attractions; she is Irish, witty, practical, and magnificently warm-hearted. It was evident that Goll, with all his dreaminess, his artistic irresponsibility, and childlike nature, had been blessed with an unexpected streak of wisdom—for once an artist had married the right woman. I congratulated him, and at the same time wondered inwardly what dreadful fate would have been his had he married somebody else.

In spite of his having lived ten years in Australia, his English had retained an exotic quaintness. He had come over with great schemes in his head, connected with a big tour for me in that continent—he would go back and prepare the way. He had laid his schemes

before Mr Elkin, prior to my return to London, for I was in the country when he arrived, but a luncheon was arranged so that we might discuss them *à trois* as soon as I got back to town. This arrangement was joyfully approved by Goll.

"Naturally," he said with his unique turn of expression, "we can do nothing definite until we have had intercourse together—do you follow me?" Mr Elkin replied that he did follow him.

When Goll came to my house, it was once again to discover all manner of new and wonderful possibilities in my piano technique. I must embody these, he urged, in a book of Technical Studies for the Pianoforte—he needed them badly out there—I must set to work at once without delay, and he would suggest varieties of fingering—it would be splendid—and there would be nothing like it in the whole of musical literature. His enthusiasm was too contagious to be resisted, and I did set to work, with the result that the studies were completed in a week.

"Ah, you darling," he exclaimed when he saw them, "I will sell hundreds of copies out there—it will be magnificent."

Edward Goll denies that it is his astonishing generosity of nature which causes him to see so much in my works—but I cannot agree with him. I can, however, be grateful for his rare affection, which, as he knows, is entirely reciprocated.

CHAPTER XXVI

DISTASTEFUL CONFESSIONS

THE criticism of some of my friends who have read part of these Memoirs in manuscript is a curious one. "You have written all those pages," they declare, "yet hardly one of your readers will get an impression of what you yourself are like."

"Is that a fault?" I ask them.

"It is at any rate a disappointment," they reply.

I feel complimented, and wonder how best to remedy the omission. To advance the excuse that I dislike talking about myself is to make a statement which sounds modest in expression yet is immodest in fact: but it happens to be the truth, and therein lies the difficulty. Nevertheless, although it is safe to say that the man who loves to talk about himself is an egotist, it by no means follows that the man who hates to talk about himself is *not* an egotist—there may be other reasons. I cannot state what those reasons are in my own case, because I don't know them; but in this concluding chapter I can at least make some "distasteful confessions," and so fulfil the requisites of an old adage adjusted to suit our purpose: "Tell me what you dislike, and I will tell you what you are."

It is strange how very similar are one's fellow-beings and with what uniformity their minds work. When I go out into society there is one question I always dread, and which I am scarcely ever permitted to escape. It is: "What are you working at now?" If the speakers have a grain of originality in their make-up, the question has a corresponding grain of variety; it

then runs: "Are you working at anything big at the moment?" In my younger days when I lived in the provinces these questions were not asked, but after my playing had been rewarded with suitable compliments, I was invariably treated to the illuminating reflection that I "must be very fond of it"—*it*, of course, meaning music. The expression of these flagrant obviosities, however, is of brief duration: not so those musical conversations in which society ladies think it essential to engage me at dinner-parties or "At homes." If on one of these occasions we meet for the first time the dialogue usually begins:

"You wrote the 'Blackbird's Song,' didn't you? I simply *love* that song!"

I groan inwardly, but bow outwardly. When shall I be permitted to forget that musical parallel to—shall we say "*We are seven*. . . .?"

I am about to turn to pleasanter subjects, when——

"You heard Kreisler the last time he was over, I suppose?"

I answer either yes or no, as the case may be.

"Wonderful player, isn't he?"

I agree with what is patent to everybody, and having taken a mouthful of soup am again about to change the subject, when——

"There was an enormous crowd again to hear Clara Butt yesterday afternoon. Of course, you went?"

I reply that I am hardly ever able to go to afternoon concerts.

"But of course you *have* heard her?"

The assumption being correct, I say so.

"*Extraordinary* voice, isn't it?"

I smile affirmatively, still racking my brains for an *un*musical lead.

"It's delightful to think we shall soon be having the opera again."

I politely acquiese.

" Melba must be getting on in years—strange how time flies—what a remarkable woman she is. *I* heard Adelina Patti, but I suppose *she* was before your day ? "

I own that I too have heard her, and go on to confess, in the hopes of diverting the topic to age and looks, that I am older than one might think—but it is no use. . . .

" Pachmann is another marvel—over seventy and still plays divinely. I think it's simply marvellous. Don't you adore his Chopin playing ? *I* do."

I pay Monsieur Pachmann an appropriate compliment—and the conversation continues in the same vein, till something serious happens to dislocate it.

There is a slightly different type of " musical conversationalist " who asks me a prodigious number of questions as to what I think of every famous executant she happens to remember. I suspect such questioners of wishing to bolster up their own opinions with those of an expert, and as I am apprehensive that they may quote my replies where I prefer they should *not*, am obliged to go warily with them. So often have well-meaning friends been the bearers of adverse opinions upon myself, that I have come to put no trust in the discretion of princes, still less of peeresses and other society women. Instrumentalists, like singers, are sensitive, and sometimes also envious ; consequently, it is necessary to be careful what one says about them. There is a well-authenticated story of how an eminent violinist and an eminent pianist sat together in a box during one of Heifetz's recitals. When the vociferous applause which greeted the end of a magnificent display of technique reverberated through the hall, the violinist in order to camouflage his discomfiture, exclaimed : " I must get out of this—the heat's unbearable ! "

" Not for *pianists* . . . " was the immortal reply.

But apart from what is discreet and diplomatic, the

wearisome effect on the listener of so many obvious questions never seems to strike the musical conversationalist-at-all-costs. I have often wondered what would happen if almost the first remark I addressed to any parson I met were: "What do you think of Moses?" After which, by way of continuing the conversation, I might *suppose* that he admired St Paul, had read the New Testament lately, and was very fond of preaching. . . . Yet should I really treat my clerical acquaintances in such a singular manner, they would jump to the conclusion that I was stupid, unhinged, or suffered from a perverted sense of humour. Nevertheless it would be far more interesting to me to hear how a parson *would* reply to my questions, than to hear what a society lady thinks of Kreisler. In brief, except perhaps on rare occasions amongst colleagues, music does not lend itself to intelligent conversation, and therefore musicians who are not utterly brainless prefer to converse on other subjects—especially in the evenings after a hard day's work.

I have, then, confessed some of my dislikes; but there are a few things I may be *supposed* to dislike, yet at which, in point of fact, I am greatly amused. In the course of years I have been the unconscious originator of a strange medley of fantastic stories about myself. It was alleged that I once appeared at a party in a violet-fronted shirt with cameo buttons; that my visiting-cards were ornamented with primroses; that I was a Buddhist; that for hours a day I sat in a cross-legged posture wrapped in religious contemplation; that, as already mentioned, I inaugurated an anti-Beethoven league; and that I had a wife and three children safely hidden away somewhere in Germany—which implies, now that I have a wife and one child in England, that I must be a bigamist.

It was while visiting Beryl Freeman, who sings in *The Beggar's Opera*, that I heard this fantastic yarn.

Beryl and her family being among my nearest friends, of course denied it ; but the tale-bearer was not to be convinced. " It is an absolute fact," she declared.

" Well, considering we've known Cyril intimately for years, he would surely have told us, or else we'd have found out somehow," was the answer.

" I tell you it's a fact," she reiterated.

I grant that all these allegations would make me a sensational and interesting person to a sensation-loving public—but they do not happen to be the truth.

Last summer my wife dined with Mr Pedro Morales in company with the world-famed singer Mr Hislop and Monsieur Andrée, director of the Stockholm Opera. As the latter was contemplating a performance of my Ballet at Stockholm, my wife spoke with him about my musical activities.

Hislop, who had recently come from America, looked across at her with a twinkle in his eye, and remarked : " Am I to understand from what you say that you are still living with Mr Scott ? "

" Well, why not ? " she returned in laughing surprise.

" As a matter of fact," he elucidated, " it's all over the States that you left him a week after you married. . . . "

It was De Quincey who wrote in effect that no philosopher was worthy of the name unless an attempt had been made on his life ; it is perhaps equally true to say that no musician is worthy of the name unless an attempt has been made on his morals. That a musician should get married at all was evidently—to the minds of hero-worshippers—a fact too moral to be interesting or romantic ; but that he should remain married was not to be countenanced for a moment—imagination must needs be called in to render first-aid and unmarry him on the spot. Yet these aidful persons overlooked one factor : it is not so easy—because not so necessary—for even a musician to unmarry himself from a wife who is not jealous ; nor again, for even a novelist to

unmarry herself from a husband who is not jealous. The truth is, I had already received first-aid of a far more practical kind—from Mrs Stevenson many years ago, when I was young and elastic-minded enough to accept it. My friends in the States, however, did not know of this, otherwise they might have hesitated for an instant before decorating with their highly-coloured pigments my reputation to their own liking.

But even though I do not suffer from jealousy, nor fly into rages, nor get drunk, nor gamble, nor take drugs—which is, of course, very immodest of me to confess in print—my wife has been the object of a lot of well-meant commiseration on the part of some of *my* friends. " All of us at home," said a little woman I have known since my childhood, " were so *very* sorry for you when we heard you were going to marry Cyril—of course he's a perfect darling, but— " shaking a wise forefinger—" only one woman in a thousand can be happy married to a genius ! "

I have since suggested to my wife that should I predecease her, she should try a genius for her next husband, and by the means of spirit-communication let me know the result. In the meantime another " candid friend " has expressed the hope that she is teaching me manners, of which I have none. Indeed, to the following criminal breach of etiquette I—this time—plead guilty. While staying with some friends whom I know very intimately, I was served with some soup which had the excellent quality of being so hot that I could not drink it. I therefore cooled it with a few drops of water out of my glass. I was afterwards to hear that a fellow-guest had remarked : " Mr Cyril Scott may be a genius, but he certainly doesn't behave like a gentleman—the idea of pouring water into his soup . . . ! "

The artistic creative impulse is a merciless task-master, leaving its slaves no peace and showing them

no gratitude for work accomplished. At least so is his attitude towards *me*, whatever it may be towards others. When I wrote the plot of my opera *The Alchemist*, I portrayed a foolish young man who pestered a Sage to initiate him into the art of evoking an Elemental. That Elemental was endowed with the power to produce for him every worldly possession that he might desire, but at the same time it left him not a moment to enjoy a single one of those possessions, and goaded him on to demand more and more. At the end the young man was overwhelmed by the results of his acquisitiveness, and had to fly to the Sage for protection. . . . It requires no great powers of perception to see that the Elemental is the symbol of Desire, and the young man symbolic of the seeker for wealth who is never content, but must for ever continue to pile up his hoard, though it be mountain-high. He, in fact, dies during the struggle, having had no leisure to enjoy the outcome of his labours—nor perhaps even the inclination.

I did not realise when I evolved this parable that it might equally well symbolise the artist and the creative impulse : I write a work—say an orchestral or chamber work—am interested to hear it performed twice or three times at the most, and after that it attracts me no longer—I am impelled to create something new. Thus to sit out a whole concert of my own works is not a pleasure : it is a penance. People have often asked me why I do not play more in public, or take more serious steps to get my works performed. And here they have their answer. Nevertheless, in this respect I am somewhat mending my ways, for One whose voice I cannot disobey wishes that I should mend them. I have learnt through Him that music of a certain kind exercises a definite effect on those who hear it—a mystery which I shall enlarge upon one day when I come either to write *My Occult Life*, or a work dealing with the hidden side of music.

And with that promise I will leave these " distasteful confessions," and this lame attempt at self-portraiture, with which I conclude my book. To lovers of romance and of lurid stories of *grandes passions* I fear it may prove disappointing; for, although during the earlier part of my life I was incommoded by a very inflammable heart, I am likewise incommoded by a sense of discretion where the feelings of others are concerned. I grant that this type of solicitude is not fashionable among some of our present-day diarists, and that one in particular has had no compunction in " giving away " the other parties concerned in her astonishing *amours*, but in this respect my tastes differ from hers. If, during the next twenty years of my life—should I live so long—I succeed in doing work of sufficient distinction to inspire some " learned idler " to write my biography, I suppose those omitted indiscretions will be brought to light and will amuse the romance-lovers of another generation. But whether they will be truly related is another question—or whether they will be related at all. . . .

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